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POINT BLANK

Dealing with violent street gangs

Menacing trends
Taking stock of Canada's gangs

Central American *maras*
Curbing extreme gang violence

First on the scene
Tips for securing forensic evidence

Royal Canadian Mounted Police / Gendarmerie royale du Canada

Canada

Ganging up on a growing concern

Fifteen years ago, the street gang phenomenon in Canada was barely a blip on our collective radar. Even among those who were aware of increasing gang-related violence, several merely pointed to the evolving street gang epidemic to our south and shrugged off our own comparatively small problem.

Not so anymore. Canada's gang culture, complete with regional characteristics, is alive and growing. Street gangs are active in all of Canada's major cities — including Toronto and Winnipeg, where the gang-related killings of two innocent bystanders in 2005 shook the Canadian public — but they are also taking hold in our medium-sized municipalities, suburban communities, Aboriginal reserves and rural towns.

We devote this issue to better understanding the trends in Canada's street gangs, and the gang situation in other countries. We look at how police and community leaders are grappling with this problem and, most importantly, how they are working together to find solutions.

We begin in Vancouver, British Columbia (B.C.), where street gangs have carved out a visible presence in the province's lucrative drug trade. Writer Caroline Ross talks to members of the B.C. Integrated Gang Task Force, a covert unit of investigators and analysts whose job is to identify, investigate and prosecute those involved in the most violent gangs. Read about how sharing even the smallest tidbit of information can be vital for the success of an investigation.

We hear from Det/Sgt Douglas Quan, a member of the Toronto Police Service's Integrated Gun and Gang Task Force, who explores the face of street gangs in Canada's largest city and how it is evolving. No longer exclusively territorial or ethnically based, gangs in Toronto are moving outside of their traditional boundaries to capture wealth and notoriety.

While the numbers tell us that most street gangs continue to plague large urban centres, this too is changing. Gangs are now moving beyond the big cities into smaller, more remote communities to grab new turf and avoid big-city police enforcement. We take a look at three Prairie communities — The Pas, Manitoba; La Loche, Saskatchewan; and Hobbema, Alberta — and some of the measures that local police are taking to turn the problem around.

Author Michael Chettleburgh describes what he calls the hybridization of street gangs in Canada — a new multi-ethnic brand that is more interested in producing synthetic drugs than flashing gang signs and colours. He outlines what needs to be done over the next decade to slow their growth.

Meanwhile, Luciano Bentenuto of the Correctional Service of Canada explains how curbing gang growth in our prisons is critical to stopping their escalation outside.

From the United States, we chat with sociologist Sudhir Venkatesh about his unusual research project: he spent almost 10 years observing the leader and activities of a Chicago street gang. We also get the straight goods from Tony Moreno, a former LAPD gang cop, who spells out what works and what doesn't on that beat.

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Finally, we get two perspectives on the violent youth gangs in France. Richard Pla, of the French National Police, speaks about the gang problem in Vénissieux and the operational partnerships that police have struck to defray gang activity before it takes hold. And criminologist Christophe Soullez offers a fascinating comparison of gangs in France and Canada.

One thing is certain: street gangs are no longer a blip on the screen. And we have to go beyond enforcement to move in the right direction.

Katherine Aldred

More to explore on street gangs from the Canadian Police College Library
www.cpc.gc.ca/library_e.htm

Books

Chatterjee, Jharna. *Gang Prevention and Intervention Strategies*. Ottawa, ON, Canada: Research and Evaluation Branch, Community Contract and Aboriginal Policing Services Directorate, Royal Canadian Mounted Police. 2006. HV 6439 .C2 C39

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Articles

Bania, Melanie. "The Challenge of Street Gangs in Canada: Imaging a Comprehensive Response." *Canadian Police Chief Magazine*, (Winter 2008), p. 17–25.

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An Ottawa Blood gang member flashes his tattoo and the blood hand sign.

Courtesy of the Ottawa Police Service

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ON THE COVER

Today's street gangs have one common brand: violence, marked by increasing gunplay and a near complete disregard for those who get caught in the crossfire. As gangs take hold in communities big and small, police and community partners are developing innovative responses to gangs' often random behaviour.

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PLATE SCANNERS HELP NAB TRAFFIC OFFENDERS

British Columbia (B.C.) police have a new tool in their traffic enforcement arsenal: automated licence plate recognition (ALPR).

Nine Vancouver-area police vehicles are now equipped with ALPR systems as part of an RCMP Traffic Services pilot project. The systems automatically recognize and scan the licence plates of passing cars using closed circuit television cameras, then run the plate numbers through police and motor vehicle databases, instantly flagging unlicenced and prohibited drivers, as well as vehicles that are uninsured, stolen or implicated in other crimes.

"(ALPR) has allowed us to check a very, very large volume of vehicles and to identify a larger percentage of people who shouldn't be on the road," says RCMP Cst Duane Hillier of the Fraser Valley Integrated Road Safety Unit.

Hillier has been using ALPR technology since the pilot project began in October 2006. He says he's sometimes able to check over 3,000 plates during a 12-hour shift — thousands more than would be possible using manual plate-checking processes.

According to a 2007 review of ALPR by the University College of the Fraser Valley, individuals who consistently violate traffic regulations are often linked to other criminal activities. For example, the report states, "one-third of people who illegally parked in disabled parking spots had a previous criminal record, . . . and one-fifth were of immediate police interest or were known or suspected of having involvement with other criminal activities."

In B.C., where there are a limited number of roadways entering and exiting the province, strategically located ALPR units could help police intercept people moving stolen vehicles or drugs, says Warren Nelson, ALPR project co-ordinator with Traffic Services.

Nelson is awaiting the results of a privacy impact assessment before determining whether to expand ALPR into other urban centres.

Cpl Dave Reichert

This B.C. traffic enforcement vehicle has four ALPR cameras mounted on the light bar. Infrared illuminators allow the cameras to operate in any light or weather conditions.

ALPR-equipped cars scanned a total of 661,155 licence plates and flagged 13,210 database hits between February 2007 and January 2008.

ALPR is widely used in Europe, particularly in the United Kingdom, where all police forces have been using the technology since 2001.

Police agencies in the Winnipeg and Toronto areas also employ ALPR.

—Caroline Ross

COMMUNITY TACKLES PUBLIC INTOXICATION

RCMP officers in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, used to deal with over 3,500 cases of public intoxication each year. Now, a volunteer outreach program called the Community Service Patrol (CSP) has relieved them of some of that burden.

Every weekend, CSP volunteers drive the streets of Yellowknife, picking up intoxicated persons and taking them to safe locations like private residences and community shelters. The service reduces the strain on RCMP cells and means local police can get back to fighting drugs and serious crime, says Insp Roch Fortin, who helped get the program on its feet.

But the patrol service is only the tip of the iceberg, says Lea Martin, senior co-chair of the Yellowknife Community Wellness Coalition that runs the CSP.

"Just taking (intoxicated persons) to an alternate location doesn't solve the problem," say Martin. "We'd like to establish a transfer station — a 'no-frills' safe place for intoxicated persons to sleep off their intoxication. Then the next step would be for them to access a day shelter (where they can receive food, assessment and support services). Those are huge steps in getting people off the street."

Mining company BHP Billiton recently stepped forward to support the project by conducting a feasibility study into these and other options for future service development.

The Yellowknife program is modelled on a similar initiative in Anchorage, Alaska. The Anchorage program has been operating for 20 years and now handles 80 per cent of the public intoxication cases that would otherwise fall to police, according to research by the RCMP. In 2007, the Anchorage transfer station dealt with over 20,000 cases of intoxication.

Fortin estimates that a fully functional program in Yellowknife could save upwards of 7,000 officer hours each year. Medical and social services staff would also see time savings.

"We're very proud of what's going to happen," says Fortin. "If we do it right, it will become a best practice for the rest of the country."

Yellowknife RCMP currently provide the CSP with liaison services, radio equipment and monitoring, gear storage and volunteer training.

—Caroline Ross

Marie-Ann Condon, RCMP G Division Communications

Partners in Yellowknife's Community Service Patrol pose beside the van volunteers use to transport publicly intoxicated persons to safe locations.

CANADA CRACKS DOWN ON MOVIE PIRACY

Canada is no longer an easy source for pirated films that supply global markets, thanks to new legislation introduced in June 2007.

Bill C-59 amended the Criminal Code of Canada, making it a criminal offence to record a movie in a movie theatre without the consent of the theatre manager — an activity known as "camcording." Statistics from the Canadian Motion Picture Distributors Association indicate that, since 2003, films camcorded in Canada have been distributed in over 20 countries as either online offerings or hard goods.

"There's always been an issue with pirated video," says Supt Ken Hansen, director of the RCMP Federal Enforcement Program that enforces Canada's copyright and trademark laws. "Camcording is only the source. With the (new) legislation, it's much easier to target somebody who is caught in the act."

The legislation gives municipal police the jurisdiction to arrest and charge any person caught camcording. The maximum penalty is five years in prison.

Previously, police could only nab camera-toting movie goers if federal investigators could prove an intent to commercially distribute the pirated films — a difficult task at the best of times, says Hansen.

Camcording has been a persistent problem in Canada since 2005, when the United States enacted its own anti-camcording legislation. Montreal is a particular hot spot because city cinemas show new-release films in both English and French.

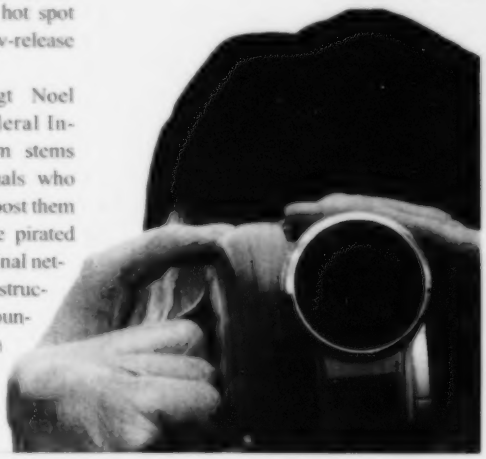
According to RCMP S/Sgt Noel St-Hilaire of the Montreal Federal Investigation Section, the problem stems from a few tech-savvy individuals who record high-quality bootlegs then post them on the Internet. Once online, the pirated films are picked up by global criminal networks with the resources and infrastructure to burn large quantities of counterfeit DVDs and distribute them for sale.

"People have no idea how fast this can be done," says St-Hilaire. "Once you're on the Internet, you're international."

One counterfeiting operation disrupted by Toronto police in 2006 was capable of producing over 13,000 DVDs per day and generating up to $17 million per year.

As of January 2008, Canadian police had laid three camcording-related charges under the new legislation.

—Caroline Ross



FORENSICS LABS SET TO LINK UP

G8 countries and Interpol have successfully tested a fledgling electronic network that will allow their forensics laboratories to instantly exchange and search hundreds of DNA profiles that may be related to major international crimes.

Built on the Interpol global police communication platform (I-24/7), the network provides authenticated DNA specialists in G8 countries with a secure mailbox to send and receive multiple crime scene DNA profiles at the click of a button. The receiving labs can then search the profiles to identify hits in their own crime scene and convicted offender databases. If a search produces a hit, relevant information is funnelled back into the main I-24/7 system and the appropriate agencies are notified.

G8 countries first tested the network in June 2007, when the FBI Laboratory Services division sent a mock DNA profile to the RCMP National DNA Data Bank (NDDB) and the U.K. Forensic Science Service. Both parties received the request and provided search results back to the FBI within minutes.

The network will streamline current search processes, which require G8 forensics labs to forward queries through their respective Interpol bureaus. Several countries now send requests by fax, says Sylvain Lalonde, technology/information manager for the NDDB, and it can sometimes be difficult to read small-print data after several facsimile transmissions. Once the new network is up and running, Lalonde says data exchanges will be "crystal clear."

The search network is being developed by the G8 Lyon-Roma DNA Search Request Network Technical Working Group, in partnership with Interpol. The parties are currently working to finalize technical requirements and legal frameworks for exchanging data under the DNA Identification Act.

Although Interpol maintains a DNA profile database that is accessible to all member countries, privacy laws prohibit most G8 countries from releasing convicted offender profiles to the database.

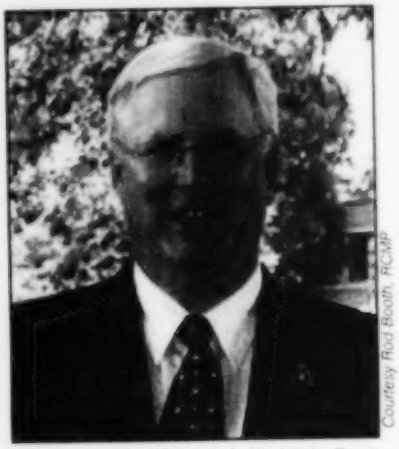
The new network will allow G8 countries to share anonymous crime scene DNA information to establish a match without the need to release DNA profiles from their databases of known individuals.

"Between the G8 countries, they have the majority of the world's DNA profiles," say S/Sgt Kevin Fahey, officer in charge of operations at Interpol Ottawa. "You're tapping into the biggest source of profiles that the world has."

—Caroline Ross

The RCMP's newest Commissioner

William J. S. Elliott shares his thoughts



Courtesy Rod Booth, RCMP

22nd Commissioner William J. S. Elliott took office in July 2007.

In July 2007, the RCMP welcomed its first Commissioner from outside the force. William J. S. Elliott. A former lawyer and senior-level bureaucrat with extensive experience in public safety and security issues, Commr Elliott recently met with Gazette *writer Caroline Ross to discuss his background and some upcoming challenges for the RCMP.*

Has your non-policing background helped or hindered you?

A bit of both. I obviously don't bring the same knowledge and skill sets to the job that my predecessors did, and that means my learning curve is steeper. On the other hand, I've dealt a lot with ministers and government decision-making and I think that's very helpful. We have lots of business that we need to do with the support and participation of others, including the Minister of Public Safety and the government as a whole.

You were the Assistant Deputy Minister for Safety and Security at Transport Canada during 9/11. What did you learn from those events?

The importance of teamwork. We really hadn't planned for these unprecedented events, but we made up for that, in part, because of very strong interpersonal relationships — I'm thinking initially of our relationships with other federal departments and agencies. It was important and very useful that we had people at Transport Canada who knew people at Nav Can (Canada's civil air navigation service), at CSIS (Canadian Security Intelligence Service) and at the RCMP. We can't forget that at the end of the day, our organization and other organizations are just collections of people.

> **"I think that the increasing sophistication of organized crime groups and the international nature of terrorism really underscore (the need for) an integrated effort."**

What do you see as the biggest challenge for the RCMP on the international front?

Capacity. We continue to have challenges in relation to our demographics — it's not quite a perfect storm, but we have a fairly significant chunk of the organization who are at or approaching retirement age and we have a big chunk of people with very few years of service. We're bringing people into the RCMP in record numbers, but those record numbers of recruits aren't keeping pace with the number of people going out the door and the expansion in our service requirements.

How are you addressing that challenge?

(One) thing we're doing is formally working with other police services. In a couple of days, for example, I'm going to Haiti to meet with our members who have been serving there and attend a United Nations medal ceremony. I'm attending along with the Director General of the Sûreté (Quebec's provincial police) and the Director of the Montreal city police. We have officers from those two forces, as well as a number of Canadian municipal forces, serving alongside us, providing training and other assistance in Haiti.

What do you see as the biggest threat to Canadian security, and how will the RCMP help address that threat?

I think that the increasing sophistication of organized crime groups and the international nature of terrorism really underscore (the need for) an integrated effort. It has been said with respect to terrorist networks that in order to combat a network, you have to have a network. We are certainly much better off now than we were in 2001. Our relationships, information sharing and infrastructure, which reinforce joint operations, are much better. But we're a long way from having a fully integrated effort.

What have you learned about the RCMP since you became Commissioner?

The organization is much more diverse, with a much broader and complicated mandate, than I understood before. During just one day last week, in British Columbia, I met with the mayors from municipalities in the Lower Mainland that are served by the RCMP, and we talked about contract policing (in some of our smallest and largest detachments). I visited a district office located in one of the roughest, toughest neighborhoods in Canada. I met with the Integrated Homicide Investigation Team. And I met with the folks who are preparing for the Olympics. Just in one day, the diversity and sophistication of what we're dealing with is quite mind-boggling. ■

Targeting street gangs from the ground up

British Columbia's integrated response

By Caroline Ross

It's midnight at The Standard Bar in New Westminster, just outside Vancouver, British Columbia (B.C.). Four unmarked police cars roll up and eight uniformed officers from the RCMP and six Vancouver-area police departments emerge. Although they hail from different policing jurisdictions, these officers are a united force. Emblazoned across their identical black jackets in bold, reflective letters: "Police Gang Task Force."

The officers enter the club and move in smooth unison, questioning familiar faces, noting IDs, performing a weapons check, taking an aggressive male into custody. Fifteen minutes later, they're back on the road, heading to Vancouver's entertainment district.

Every night of the week, two Uniform Gang Task Force (UGTF) teams like this one patrol the streets, clubs and bars of Vancouver and over 20 surrounding communities. The teams visit some 30 establishments a night. They're on the lookout for gang members, gang associ-

ates, gang vehicles, weapons and broken curfews. Their presence sends a clear message: gang activity won't be tolerated.

The UGTF is just one of the integrated efforts by Vancouver-area police to combat persistent, problematic street gang violence in B.C.'s Lower Mainland — an area of 2.2 million people mashed into the southwest corner of the province, right against the coast and the U.S. border.

Here, street gangs have carved out a visible presence, entrenching themselves in B.C.'s lucrative drug trade and employing weapons obtained from the U.S. to enforce their turf.

In 2007, there were 247 gang-related shootings in the Lower Mainland, many of them occurring in public spaces like streets, parks, restaurants and clubs. One gang war in a public park littered the area with over 115 shell casings and left bullets in nearby cars and town homes.

In response to the violence, the Lower Mainland's six municipal police forces and 13 RCMP detachments have combined forces to fight street gang activity, from the ground-level right up to the highest ranks of organized crime.

Street-level violence suppression

The UGTF took to the streets in November 2007 as an "in-your-face" deterrent to gang violence.

"The point of us being out there is to be present, make our appearance obvious and check the known gang targets and known gang associates and their vehicles and any other place in their control for weapons," says Vancouver Police Insp Dean Robinson, head of the UGTF. "We're looking for every opportunity to arrest them."

In its first three months of operation, UGTF teams checked a total of 4,622 individuals and 5,873 vehicles (occupied and unoccupied). They made 19 warrant arrests and issued 35 criminal charges for weapons offences, drug offences, assaults and breach of bail or parole.

"The major players definitely know that we're out there," says Chilliwack RCMP Sgt Bryon Massie, speaking during his three-month stint as a UGTF team leader. "They might not come out as often, and they're not happy about it. We're disrupting their business."

Fuelling investigations

The UGTF has also become a valuable source of street-level gang intelligence. The teams are learning who hangs out where, who associates with who, who co-operates and who doesn't — and they're recording key observations in nightly occurrence reports.

That's good news for the B.C. Integrated Gang Task Force (BCIGTF), a covert unit of 60 investigators and analysts from across the Lower Mainland whose job it is to identify, investigate and prosecute gangs involved in chronic, violent criminal activity such as homicides, extortions, drive-by shootings and kidnappings.

Because gang investigations are resource intensive — it can take over 100 officers from multiple agencies to complete a single kidnapping investigation — investigators must go after high-value targets, says Delta Police Supt John Robin, head of the BCIGTF.

The best way to do that, says Robin, is to combine provincial organized crime assessments and criminal intelligence analyses with gritty street-level details, then tie it all together in a tactical, timely manner.

"We need to know that if an individual was checked in Abbotsford, that the same person was checked in Vancouver and that they were potentially related to a shooting in Westminster, and we need to know it now," says Robin. "It's no good a month from now."

To that end, the BCIGTF launched an "intelligence hub" concept in November 2007. BCIGTF analysts gather and review gang-related information from multiple sources on a daily basis, siphoning through for high-value nuggets that could bolster existing files, signal new targets or connect investigations. The analysts produce a daily intelligence report (complete with photographs, bail conditions and arrest warrants for known gang targets), then fan it out across the region.

The whole process keeps front-line officers informed of regional gang activities and encourages the officers to feed relevant information back up to investigators and analysts.

The exchange is vital, says Robinson of the UGTF, because the simple observation of a tattoo or gang association "can be gold when it comes to criminal organization investigations later on."

Officers from the Lower Mainland's Uniform Gang Task Force speak to a member of a notorious Lower Mainland gang after removing him from a Vancouver night club.

Courtesy UGTF

Links to organized crime

Street gangs are often "the soldiers for organized crime groups," says Robin of the BCIGTF. Gang investigators must therefore co-ordinate efforts with B.C.'s larger organized crime investigation team, the Combined Forces Special Enforcement Unit (CFSEU).

"There's a blurring of lines between the lowest gang — unorganized street crime — all the way up to terrorism," says RCMP Supt Doug Kiloh of CFSEU-BC. "(The BCIGTF's) targets — violent street gangs — are trying to make a name for themselves and scratch out their bit of turf. The survivors of that are going to be our main targets in years to come. We have to share information and be alive to what (the other is) working on."

Case in point: the two units recently determined that they shared a common target — gang members known to the BCIGTF were also part of a larger CFSEU investigation into a major international drug smuggling ring (the gang members were transporting drugs into and out of Canada). The BCIGTF and CFSEU responded by forming a temporary joint team to complete the investigations specific to those gang members.

"We had to reshape to meet the needs of the law and the criminal activity," says Kiloh. He notes that the CFSEU and BCIGTF are exploring other opportunities for integration, given that they both target "the continuum of organized crime" and have similar requirements for staffing and surveillance. The CFSEU already houses BCIGTF wire tap facilities, exhibits and fleet maintenance.

Courtesy CFSEU-BC

Vancouver street gangs tried to transport these duffle bags — stuffed with 147 kilograms of cocaine — from the United States to Canada as part of an international drug smuggling ring. CFSEU-BC and BCIGTF investigators combined forces to disrupt the transportation network.

The future of gang enforcement

It's clear that the Lower Mainland's integrated gang enforcement efforts are paying off. Several violent, well-connected gang members are now in custody or facing criminal charges. Police forces are developing a deeper, shared understanding of regional gang culture, and members directly involved in the integrated efforts are building specific skill sets and working relationships that will serve their home agencies well in the future.

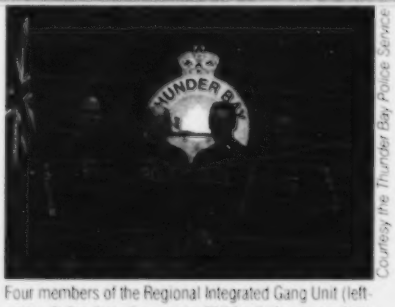
Although the UGTF and intelligence hub are still temporary measures — the BCIGTF is seeking permanent funding for both — police officers across the Lower Mainland are keeping their fingers crossed.

Sgt Massie, stationed back with the Chilliwack RCMP, is one of them. "We can't stop this now." ■

New integrated gang unit for northwestern Ontario

Police forces in northwestern Ontario have formed an integrated front against growing gang activity in Thunder Bay and outlying areas.

The Regional Integrated Gang Unit (RIGU) — composed of 11 officers from the RCMP, the Thunder Bay Police Service and the Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service — was created in September 2007 in response to increased violent gang activity, including assaults, sexual assaults, robberies, home invasions, and traditional crimes of profit such as theft, drugs and prostitution.



Courtesy the Thunder Bay Police Service

Four members of the Regional Integrated Gang Unit (left-right): D/Cst Rick Popowich (TBPS), D/Sgt Andy Clark (TBPS), Cst Ron Hines (RCMP) and D/Cst Jason Rybak (TBPS).

"It involves the creation of a seamless unit that has three primary mandates: intelligence gathering, education, and investigation and enforcement," says RCMP Sgt Rob Cameron, who oversees the RCMP's Thunder Bay detachment and sits on RIGU's joint management team.

RIGU has identified nine gangs currently operating in the Thunder Bay area, and about 135 gang members — some with connections to gangs in Toronto or Manitoba.

The unit has also moved quickly to fulfil its enforcement mandate. In October 2007, RIGU collaborated with the Thunder Bay Community Response Team to successfully charge three adult males with possession of a controlled substance for the purpose of trafficking and possession of the proceeds of crime.

— Jean Floyd

Not in my backyard

Rural responses to gang activity

By Caroline Ross

Street gang activity in Canada is no longer just an urban phenomenon. Gangs are moving beyond the big cities and taking hold in smaller, more remote communities.

The trend is particularly evident in Canada's Prairie provinces — Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba — where major Aboriginal gangs have taken advantage of cultural connections in outlying native communities to grab new turf, open new markets, recruit new members and escape big-city police enforcement.

Here's a look at the situation in three Prairie communities — and a glimpse at how rural police are combating the problem.

The Pas, Manitoba: Gateway to the North

The Pas, population 5,600, is located 620 kilometres northwest of Winnipeg, Manitoba. People come here for the Trappers' Festival in February or to view the northern lights year-round, but street gangs have other plans.

The Pas has become a provincial hub for the Indian Posse (IP), one of Manitoba's largest Aboriginal street gangs, says Cpl Lee Fortin of The Pas RCMP General Investigation Section. The gang has set up a crack cocaine outpost, shuttling $500-an-ounce crack up from Winnipeg and selling it for over $1,500 an ounce in The Pas vicinity.

"In Winnipeg, (gang members) are facing gang shootings and a lot of opposition," says Fortin. Things are cooler in The Pas, he says, because the IP virtually owns the local drug market and has effectively snuffed out rival gangs. "A lot of our high-ranking IP members in the North are from The Pas region, so this is home ground."

Many local players commit crimes elsewhere in Manitoba, then return to The Pas to lay low, says Fortin. When the RCMP hounds them out, some gangsters seek refuge in other northern communities.

This transient behaviour is one of the reasons why the RCMP's 19 northern Manitoba detachments convened the Northern Intelligence Program in 2006. Detachment representatives meet at least twice a year to share local gang and drug intelligence with one another, and with provincial criminal intelligence analysts, Crown attorneys and the Winnipeg-based Integrated Gang Intelligence Unit.

The program has helped police link northern gang members with activity in three or four detachments and with crimes down south, says Fortin, and it's a particularly valuable forum for small, busy northern detachments.

"Unfortunately . . . we don't always (have time to) call the surrounding detachments to see if anyone's heard of this guy. So we're making the connections there (at the meetings), and then we know what to focus on."

La Loche, Saskatchewan: End of the jail trail

La Loche, Saskatchewan, is an 11-hour car journey northwest of Regina, at the very end of Highway 155. Most of the community's 2,300 residents are members of the Dene native band, historical rival to the province's Cree majority. When that rivalry hit the provincial correctional system, La Loche's top gang was born.

"La Loche is an institutionalized community," says Cpl Carrie Boone of the La Loche RCMP. Residents are regularly in and out of correctional facilities in Prince Albert (500 kilometres south), and many families have two or three generations in custody. "It's almost like a status symbol here, going to jail."

According to Barry Mayoros, a security intelligence officer at the Prince Albert Correctional Centre, inmates of Dene descent — most of them from the La Loche area — formed the Scorpion Brothers (SB) in 2006 as a means to protect themselves

Scorpion tattoos like this one help identify members of La Loche's Scorpion Brothers (SB) gang. The SB captain sporting this tattoo has been in and out of correctional facilities since his youth.

Barry Mayoros, Prince Albert Correctional Centre

from Cree-based gangs that dominated the institution. When corrections staff tried to quell the problem by moving Cree gang leaders into isolation, the SB recruited more members. They now form the largest gang in the facility.

The SB has taken similar hold in La Loche, says Boone. Incarcerated members usually return to the community upon release and use their connections to peddle drugs in the region.

With a permanent road between La Loche and Fort McMurray, Alberta, now in the works, the local drug trade may soon go inter-provincial. Mayoros is seeing more Alberta gang markings in the Prince Albert Correctional Centre, and he believes that some are from the La Loche area.

La Loche RCMP have taken a zero-tolerance approach to gang activity, strictly enforcing bail and release conditions and working closely with Crown council and provincial criminal intelligence units to put gang members behind bars. But it's a tough battle in a community where the gang, the prison, and the native culture are deeply entwined.

"The prison system is a revolving door," says Boone, who notes that two high-ranking SB members have recently been released back to the community with no conditions. "It will be interesting to see . . . how long (it takes) before we pick them up for something."

Hobbema, Alberta: From drive-bys to drill practice

Hobbema, Alberta, is fertile ground for gang activity. Located 100 kilometres south of Edmonton, it's close enough to the big city for all the major gangs to want a piece of the local drug trade. The community's four native bands don't always get along, and the massive youth population — over 50 per cent of Hobbema's 12,000 residents are 18 and under — craves recognition.

Cst Richard Huculiak of the Hobbema RCMP says the gangs use children under age 12 to run drugs and guns, act as lookouts, and participate in stabbings and shootings — basically do the gang's "dirty work" and shield older members from criminal charges.

Cst Richard Huculiak, Hobbema RCMP

Members of the Hobbema Cadet Corps practice their marching drills.

"The kids look at it as excitement and something to do," says Huculiak. "They were looking for some attention, and they got it."

In November 2005, Huculiak and Sgt Mark Linnell gave the kids another option: they launched the Hobbema Cadet Corps. Today, 996 cadets — almost one-sixth of Hobbema's youth population — line up twice a week to perfect marching drills that they showcase nationally. Inter-band rivalries are breaking down, and over 250 cadets are now preparing for careers with the RCMP, the Canadian military and the oil and banking industries.

"We've taken the kids back, and given them something more positive and structured and educational to do," says Huculiak, who co-ordinates the cadet program. He notes that 2007 was the first year in two decades that youth crime and violence in Hobbema did not increase.

While the cadet corps can't claim all the credit for the positive results — Hobbema RCMP launched a 10-member Community Response Unit (CRU) to target gangs and drugs in 2006 — the program has definitely put a dent in gang recruiting, says Cpl Keith Durance of the CRU.

"A lot of these kids that turn to gangs are looking for a feeling of belonging, and that's where the cadet corps comes in. Instead of going to a gang, they belong to a different group that has much more positive things going on for them." ■

ARE GANGS MOVING INTO YOUR COMMUNITY?

Here are four signs that might mean the answer is yes:

- sudden influx of non-residents (e.g., local hotels busier than normal)
- local drug traffickers less active (perhaps "muscled out" by a new gang)
- increase in violent crime
- unfamiliar faces around town (particularly "stand outs" who may be affiliated with a new gang)

Courtesy Alberta RCMP training video "Aboriginal gangs: from pow-wows to prison cells."

How are street gangs evolving in your city?

The panellists

A/Insp Kevin Galvin, Organized Crime Branch, Edmonton Police Service
S/Sgt Mike Callaghan, Youth - Guns and Gangs Unit, Ottawa Police Service
D/Cst Carol Campbell-Waugh, crime analyst, Halifax Regional Police

A/Insp Kevin Galvin

The current state of organized crime groups in the Edmonton and northern Alberta region has come about more as a revolution than an evolution. If we are to consider the street gang to be a localized, turf-oriented, marginally organized group with a minimal hierarchy that commits crime upon a narrowly focused objective, then our region has experienced very little in the way of street gangs but is flush with well-organized, well-educated, sophisticated criminal networks and organized crime groups.

Prior to the 1980s, organized crime entities in our area were oriented around traditional organized crime (TOC) groups and outlaw motorcycle gangs (OMG). Pre- and post-Second World War immigration into the Edmonton region saw people of Mediterranean, Asian, Eastern European and Middle Eastern descent establishing very closely knit yet insular communities in the city and region. It was from these communities that the TOC groups emerged. In comparison to the OMG groups of the day, these crime groups operated with a level of organization, sophistication and class that the OMG clubs did not possess. This environment, complicated by the urban sprawl of the major centres and large distances between those centres, allowed the TOC groups to operate with relative anonymity in relation to police enforcement.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Edmonton region saw the first sign of street gangs in the form of organized crime groups developing from the new immigrants of southwest and southeast Asia. Many of the groups operated in a street gang format. They had a loose hierarchical structure, discernible through tattoos and distinctive markings, clothing and vehicles. Their prime commodity was cocaine distribution and trafficking. Project KACHOU, a joint forces organized crime investigation that focused on the main crime groups, caused further fracturing of this community but also educated all the operating crime groups in the region to the few tactics and strategies that the police could use.

After a brief gang war that started in 1999 between the splinter groups from Project KACHOU and other burgeoning crime groups in the region, the organized crime community quickly coalesced around the emerging economy in the region. Today, police in Edmonton are dealing with a level of collaboration, co-operation, flexibility and agility between groups that we have never seen before. This current relationship is directly attributable to the state of the economy in the province. Currently, the Metro Edmonton Gang Unit recognizes 25 operating criminal enterprises, 24 of which have provincial–territorial, national and international organized crime capacity.

Our response to this phenomenon has been to create an enforcement unit that is as flexible and agile as the groups we are investigating. The Metro Edmonton Gang Unit is fully integrated with the RCMP Provincial Capital District and is partially funded by the Alberta Solicitor General. This relationship allows us to travel within the province in order to investigate the members of the groups in areas outside our traditional jurisdictional boundaries. We rely on the full spectrum of investigative opportunities — from basic bar walks and house visits to advanced techniques like surveillance operations and private communication intercepts — to combat the rapidly growing level of gang-related and gang-motivated activities in Western Canada.

S/Sgt Mike Callaghan

In 2001, the Ottawa Police Service (OPS) formally recognized that street gangs were emerging in the city of Ottawa. As a result, a two-person Gang Investigation Unit was formed. This unit quickly identified approximately eight gangs, with an aggregate number of approximately 100 members, operating in the streets of Ottawa.

Since that time, the OPS Guns and Gangs Unit has expanded to include 11 sworn officers and a youth intervention co-ordinator. The number of street gangs identified in Ottawa now encompasses approximately 600 members and approximately 19 confirmed street gangs. Unlike many other cities in Canada, the typical street gang in Ottawa reveals a multicultural composition, with an average age of between 17 and 25 years.

In January 2006, police intelligence indicated that of the 600 confirmed gang members in Ottawa, 314 were born outside

Canada. Additionally, the two predominant gangs, the "Bloods" and the "Crips," were composed of 57 different nationalities. The majority of the gang members were male — only 30 female gang members were identified — and only 56 gang members were under the age of 18. Ottawa has also seen the advent of hybrid gangs, a multicultural group of individuals who get together in a less organized manner than traditional street gangs, with more focus on economic than turf factors.

Over the past two years, the OPS has seen a significant increase in the mobility of street gangs in Ottawa. Ottawa gang members are not only transient within the Toronto–Ottawa–Montreal corridor, but they are also a subject of interest to police services in the western provinces.

While trafficking of drugs and firearms — along with profits related to the control of prostitution — are strong sources of income for street gangs, the level of sophistication in the control of these elements has also evolved. Sexual exploitation of young girls is on the rise and there appears to be a very complex network of gang-related members and associates that facilitate the scourge of sexual exploitation.

It is safe to say that suppression and law enforcement agencies play a key role in addressing the problems related to street gangs. However, it goes without saying that education and awareness play an equally important role in preventing gang-related violence.

Targeting prevention efforts at children aged eight and under, as well as their guardians/parents, may prove beneficial. By the age of nine, many children in more underprivileged neighbourhoods have been approached by gang members.

Additionally, addressing gangs in a holistic manner is paramount. This must incorporate dealing with the victim, the offender, the families and the communities involved. The OPS's Youth Intervention and Diversion Program, which operates in collaboration with the Ottawa Boys and Girls Club, is a key partner in ensuring that the risk factors and the source of the gang problem are identified and dealt with in a timely, meaningful and appropriate manner.

Ottawa gang members are not only transient within the Toronto-Ottawa -Montreal corridor, but they are also a subject of interest to police services in the western provinces.

S/Sgt Mike Callaghan

D/Cst Carol Campbell-Waugh

In Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), street gangs are a concern because their violent actions are often carried out in public. While other provinces have reports of street gangs fighting internally or with rival gangs, violence in HRM tends to be random and not within or between gangs. Territorial issues are not common in HRM, but gang-motivated crimes do involve violence, and that creates concerns for public safety.

Members of street gangs in HRM are predominantly young adults. They may start out bullying other students at school, but they eventually graduate to more serious offences including mischief, assault, street-level robbery, theft, use of firearms and other weapons, and drug trafficking. Members of some gangs are reported to be involved in prostitution, and a few have been charged with attempted murder.

The most active gangs in HRM include the Northend Darkside and the Young Mob, but there are other gangs that are very sporadic in their activities and membership. Many groups are spontaneous in their criminal activity and possess low- to mid-level criminal capabilities. The majority of the gangs in HRM are not mobile; therefore, their activities are concentrated in their areas of residence.

Many gangs are not likely to evolve into more criminally sophisticated organizations. However, some gangs do have direct links to other organized crime groups in the area. Members of the Young Mob are being used by an organized crime group to intimidate people with assaults and other crimes, and to force people to sell drugs. Other known criminal organizations have street gangs committing vehicle thefts on their behalf.

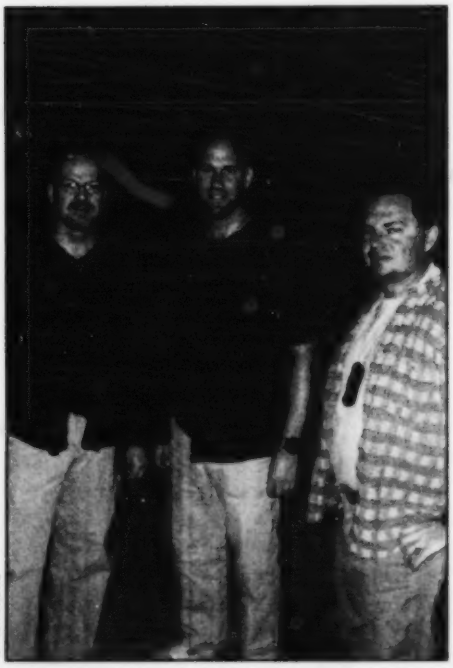
In 2004, the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics completed a study entitled Criminal Victimization in Canada. The study revealed that among 17 Canadian cities surveyed, Halifax had the highest violent crime rate, with 229 violent incidents for every 1,000 people over age 15. Youth gangs, with their involvement in violent street-level robberies, assaults and weapons offences, were a major contributing factor.

To help address some of the violence and the public safety concerns, Halifax Regional Police developed several initiatives, including:

- a Quick Response Unit that acts as a patrol resource and helps address short-term crime trends and criminal activity
- an intelligence-led policing model that positions criminal operations as a front-line resource
- the Community Officer Program, which takes community-based policing one step further to gather ground-level intelligence
- beat officers who patrol busier areas and help address public safety concerns;
- a Gang Portfolio, which keeps track of gang members, their associates and their activities
- Operation Breach, an initiative that sends officers to check compliance of individuals on conditional release

These initiatives appear to have reduced the number of violent offences carried out in public spaces. For example, there were 528 robberies in HRM in 2005 and 570 in 2006, compared to 403 in 2007. Furthermore, based on preliminary numbers, directed patrol initiatives in known gang neighbourhoods have seen a reduction in violent incidents. ■

Steering youth away from street gangs



Chris Adams

RIGU members (left-right) D/Cst Andy Clark, D/Cst Sean Mulligan and D/Cst Rob Steudle, all of the Thunder Bay Police Service, prepare to speak to students in Fort Hope, Ontario, about the dangers of gang involvement.

By Caroline Ross

Talk to any gang investigator, and you'll learn that enforcement is only part of the solution to any gang problem. Police and community partners must also focus on gang prevention — particularly among youth at risk for gang membership.

Defining youth at risk can be challenging, says Sgt Rob Cameron, commander of the RCMP detachment in Thunder Bay, Ontario, and a leading force behind the formation of northwestern Ontario's Regional Integrated Gang Unit (RIGU). "It's (usually) those youth that are exposed to gang activity, and because of certain lifestyle aspects they are subject to the recruitment process that gangs often employ," says Cameron. "But any youth is a youth at risk when gang activity is within their area."

Because gangs cast such a wide net, police and community partners must employ a range of prevention and intervention strategies.

In northwestern Ontario, for example, RIGU officers spend a significant amount of time visiting schools and Aboriginal reserves to speak about the dangers of gang involvement. Officers also show kids a locally produced video called "Gangland – No Tomorrow," which features interviews with area gang members and ex-gang members.

"Some of them are serving life sentences, some have lost friends and family members, and they speak about that kind of thing," says Cameron, who adds that the video gives kids a perspective they won't hear about from gang recruiters.

Drawing on gang members' experiences in a different regard, the North End Women's Centre (NEWC) in Winnipeg, Manitoba, has created a gang prevention program aimed at single mothers who live in high-crime or gang-run neighbourhoods.

"Peace Begins at Home" teaches single mothers about positive parenting techniques and provides a support network to help mothers keep their children away from crime, says Patty Parsons, executive director of the NEWC.

Some program content is based on NEWC interviews with incarcerated gang members, who spoke about what their parents could have done to keep them away from gangs. While the answers might seem simple — like putting kids in sports or kissing them good night — some mothers don't have these skills because they never learned them from their own parents, says Parsons.

"The number one reason ex-gang members said they joined gangs was for a sense of belonging," says Parsons. "Our program teaches moms how they can incorporate this (sense of belonging) into the everyday lives of all the children they're living with."

Preventing kids from joining gangs is one thing, but what about kids who are already entrenched? Community partners in Surrey, British Columbia, have some answers.

In October 2007, the Surrey School District launched "iR3" — intervention, Rethink, Refocus, Reintegrate — as part of its Safe Schools initiative.

iR3 targets students in Grades 6 through 8 who have been suspended for violence, bullying or possession of drugs, alcohol or weapons. The students spend two days at a community centre learning about conflict resolution, self esteem, and the realities of drugs and gang life.

"We send them back to school with a whole new set of skills," says Rob Rai, Youth Diversity Liaison with the Surrey School District. It's much more effective, he says, than sending kids home to fester, unsupervised.

And iR3 may soon become part of a larger, community-wide gang intervention effort.

Last year, youth-serving agencies in Surrey — including the School District, Parks and Recreation, the RCMP and the B.C. Ministry of Children and Family Development — drafted plans for a Community Action Assessment Network (CAAN) that targets youth on the brink of gang activity.

Set for launch in mid-2008, the network will assess at-risk youth on an individual basis, then provide program options that both deter gang involvement and fit each youth's specific needs — a sports program, perhaps, or one-on-one mentoring.

Best of all, says Rai, the CAAN ensures that all of Surrey's youth-serving agencies are on the same page with regards to gang intervention tools and strategies.

"A kid could be anywhere in the city," he says, "and front-line staff would all have the same training and understanding of gang-associated youth." ■

Gang leader for a day

Sociologist gets an inside look at Chicago gang life

*As a sociology student in 1989, Sudhir Venkatesh began a research project unlike any other: he met a Chicago street gang leader and was allowed to spend almost 10 years observing the gang's activities — including crack sales, extortions, beatings, drive-by shootings and outright gang war. He even helped lead the gang for a day. Now a professor at Columbia University, Venkatesh has just released a book documenting his experience (*Gang Leader for a Day, *Penguin Press, 2008). Fresh off his book tour, he shared some insight with the* Gazette's *Caroline Ross.*

How did you end up becoming a "casual observer" in a Chicago street gang?

I was never a member of the gang, just a graduate student observing. I met the high-ranking gang leader accidentally because I was administering a survey for young people in his community. We developed a mutual curiosity — in no small part because he had a college degree — and he let me hang out with his members for nearly a decade.

How were you able to gain the trust and confidence of several high-ranking gang members?

I had to separate myself from journalists, cops, social workers and others who ask questions, but who don't stay around long enough to find out the complexity and nuances in the community. I decided to avoid questions altogether, and tenants (in the Chicago public housing projects where the gang operated) immediately understood that I wanted to see a different side of their life — one at greater depth.

> **"The level of interpersonal violence shocked me — I couldn't believe the ways in which the gang leader had to inflict harm to get things done."**
>
> Sudhir VenKatesh

What do you see as the traits of an effective gang leader?

I think gang leaders have to be willing to use violence at a moment's notice. They also have to have the organizational skills to maintain cohesion among several hundred people — many of whom are busily engaged in illegal activity.

You helped lead the gang for a day. What surprised you most about gang operations?

I stood by the leader for 24 hours. The level of interpersonal violence shocked me — I couldn't believe the ways in which the gang leader had to inflict harm to get things done. I also was surprised that these young kids would stand out on the corner and sell drugs at such great risk of arrest and physical harm, for so little money. It just shows you how few opportunities exist for them.

What was your most intense experience with the gang?

Watching residents (of the housing project) deal with domestic abusers was very engrossing. The police were largely unavailable to tenants — they had neglected the community for the better part of four decades. And there were few social services for residents. In this climate, the residents had to police themselves and sometimes that meant tracking down perpetrators of rape and abuse, and beating them up.

Paresh Ghandi

Sociologist or gang leader? Professor Sudhir Venkatesh has been both — albeit the latter was only for a day.

What did you learn about police interaction with the gang and its victims?

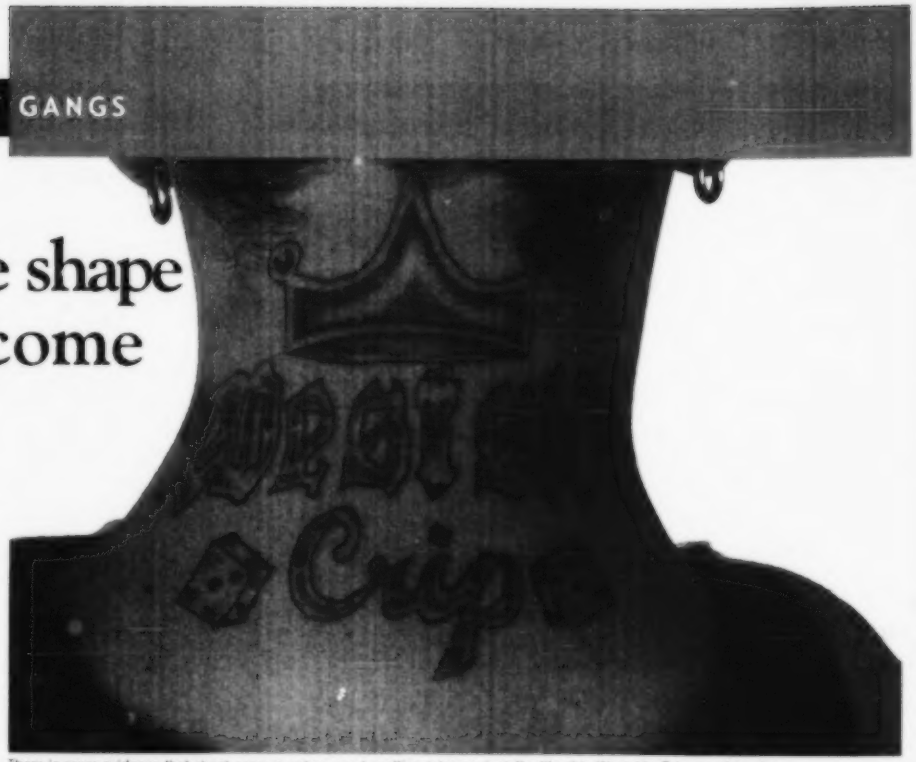
The majority of the police didn't have much to do with the community. They didn't answer calls, they never patrolled, they were a neglectful force. But there were a few, mostly black, cops who had grown up in the community who were very helpful: they worked closely with tenants to help maintain order. I have the utmost respect for them because the conditions they were working in were extremely dangerous.

What advice do you have for police who deal with gangs on a regular basis?

Use community intermediaries. The problem with most U.S. policing departments is that they feel unaccountable to everyone. The best police always involve the community — not just in a token way in community policing initiatives — but even in the regular oversight of the department. It does police little good to act as a group fully independent of the community. ■

Street gangs in Canada: the shape of things to come

By Michael C. Chettleburgh



There is more evidence that street gang members are travelling interprovincially, like this Westside Crip member who moved from Alberta to Ottawa.

Much has changed in the past three years with respect to our understanding of street gangs in Canada. Perhaps it was the sheer violence displayed in several major cities in 2005 — fiercely punctuated by the indiscriminate killings of innocent teenagers Jane Creba of Toronto and Phillipe Haiart of Winnipeg — that forced all Canadians to confront a problem that law enforcement has known about for years, but has essentially lacked the resources to contend with.

Today, robust guns-and-gangs units are a staple of most major police agencies. The media cover gang-related crimes and trials like never before, and various levels of government have invested substantial funds in anti-gang measures and gang research. Community groups like Community Solutions to Gang Violence in Edmonton and the multi-stakeholder Youth Gang Committee headed by Crime Prevention Ottawa have studied local conditions and thrown their weight against the problem. While we know more today about street gangs than ever before, we are regrettably playing catch-up with a foe that is transmuting and growing — and will likely continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

The Canadian context

It is difficult to accurately estimate the size of street gang membership in Canada. In its 2006 Annual Report on Organized Crime, the Criminal Intelligence Service Canada pegged the number of street gang members under the age of 30 at approximately 11,000. This estimate is perhaps conservative and one that will grow in coming years as police agencies across the country continue to expand their specialty gang units and develop better local intelligence. Taking into account known gang members, suspected gang members, girls and young women who are associated with gangs in some way (as girlfriends or income earners through the sex trade), the many young "wannabe" gang members who are at risk of full gang membership, and the under-reporting of gang affiliation in northern Aboriginal communities, the number of Canadian street gang members and so-called affiliates could very well be much higher.

One vexing question is why thousands of young Canadians are involving themselves with dangerous street gangs. Depending on who you talk to, you'll get a range of answers — from simplistic explanations involving the influence of media violence or hip hop culture to well-reasoned socio-economic explanations. Talk to actual or reformed street gang members, and they'll give a wide variety of reasons for their involvement, including broken families, poverty, persistent discrimination, sibling or parental gang involvement, the sense of camaraderie and excitement of the gang, and a lack of positive role models and things to do. They'll also refer to the pull of the lucrative illicit drug trade and to dangerous social housing communities, where oftentimes they are faced with a binary decision: either become a victim of gang violence or join a gang and victimize others. In practical terms, this means that no two street gangsters are the same in terms of their status in the gang or propensity for violence. A "one-size-fits-all" approach to dealing with gangs and their participants will therefore be ineffective.

Future challenges

From a gang suppression perspective, challenges lie ahead. It is difficult to make general qualitative statements about street gangs in Canada because from coast to coast to coast, they are very diverse. The secretive Asian gangs of Vancouver are as different from the large Aboriginal gangs in Winnipeg as they are from the black and multi-ethnic gangs in Toronto and elsewhere. What we can say with some degree of certainty, however, is that street gangs across the country are increasingly aggressive with their recruitment. They attract youth under age 12 and as young as age eight — youth whom they know cannot be formally charged with a criminal offence — to participate in criminal activities such as drug dealing. They recruit young women to work, under duress or

drug addiction, in the growing teenage prostitution market.

Moreover, there is an increasing "hybridization" of street gangs, characterized by multi-ethnic composition, less visible use of gang communication like colours and dress code, less focus on protecting geographic turf, more focus on protecting economic markets, increased co-operation with more sophisticated traditional organized crime groups, and fluid gang affiliations where gangs or gang members come together for a short period of time to commit opportunistic crimes, then disband.

At the same time, violence and rivalries are escalating, largely due to the highly competitive, multibillion dollar business of illicit drugs — from mainstay products like cocaine, heroin and cannabis to gang-produced synthetic drugs like ecstasy, GHB and methamphetamine. While the 2006 rate of violent crime involving the use of firearms in Canada remained stable for the fourth consecutive year — according to a 2006 Statistics Canada study examining trends in gun violence — police-reported data showed that among young people aged 12 to 17, the use of guns in violent crime has increased 32 per cent since 2002.

There is evidence that gang members are increasingly "suburbanizing" — moving from large cities to outlying areas — as well as moving interprovincially. These movements are driven as much by effective, large-scale police suppression as by the gangs' search for untapped drug markets. More than one large police agency in Canada now reports that members of notorious U.S.-based gangs like MS-13, the Latin Kings and 18th Street have recently moved into its jurisdiction. Added to this fractious mix are more guns on the street, a greater willingness of gangsters to use those guns, and the problems of witness intimidation and promulgation of "stop snitchin' " campaigns, which make the task of successfully prosecuting cases more difficult.

Mobilizing against street gangs

The moves we make in Canada in the next decade are pivotal in slowing the growth of gangs, which are by their nature expansive organisms. To combat street gangs, police agencies across the country need additional resources — including staff, technologies and funds — to support confidential informant development, gang training, complex investigations and the creation of multi-jurisdictional task forces (because gangs do not respect jurisdictional boundaries).

Irrespective of its size or dimension, however, the street gang issue is simply not a problem that police must grapple with alone. The RCMP, municipal and provincial police agencies and others now know that police cannot arrest their way out of the street gang problem through sheer force or willpower. They need the co-operation of all citizens and sectors of society to stem the growth of gangs. Mobilized communities that accept responsibility for the existence of gangs in their locales are the most effective in dealing with gangs.

Today, each city in Canada ought to take careful stock of its local gang situation with police, citizens, political leaders, social service agencies, educators and other front line professionals at the table, and craft a balanced and collaborative approach to the gang issue. Police-led enforcement and suppression should focus on the 20 per cent of all gang members that are responsible for 80 per cent of the drama and violence we see in the streets.

To support this activity, greater resources must be deployed in early identification and intervention of medium- to high-risk youth, in order to steer them clear of gangs in the first place. Taxpayers must demand more government investment in evidence-based prevention programs that equip youth under age 12 with the protective life skills and knowledge they need to avoid the pull of gangs and other high-risk behaviours. More must also be done to help gang members exit the gang life, because redemption is still possible for the many who have been conditioned to believe that once you become a gang member, there is no way out.

Finally, every citizen has a role to play in ensuring the health and safety of his or her own community. Law enforcement partners must encourage citizens to co-operate with police, act as positive role models for youth, demand more action against the root causes of gang affiliation, and reject the underground economy — especially the illicit drug trade — which fuels the growth of gangs and the sheer violence to which we increasingly bear witness. ■

Michael C. Chettleburgh is President of Astwood Strategy Corporation and author of Young Thugs: Inside the Dangerous World of Canadian Street Gangs *(HarperCollins Canada, 2007), a finalist for the 2007/2008 Donner Book Prize, which recognizes the best Canadian book on public policy."*

Beyond turf

Greed and notoriety fuel Toronto gangs

By Det/Sgt Douglas Quan
Integrated Gun and
Gang Task Force
Toronto Police Service

The late 1990s leading into the new millennium was a volatile period on the streets of Toronto. The Greater Toronto Area (GTA) was experiencing a rise in brazen, high-profile shootings in a number of very different communities. This escalation in firearms use and gang-related activity was the catalyst for the Toronto Police Service (TPS) to embark on a series of pilot projects and focused task forces to address the problem head-on.

Between 2000 and 2001, the TPS created a Street Violence Task Force, which evolved into the Gun Task Force pilot project. This initiative, led by a focused group of investigators, communicated with all specialized sub units and front line officers to gather intelligence and conduct timely enforcement. The Gun Task Force was very successful in its efforts and resulting seizures; however, it also revealed the need for a permanent unit to address ongoing illegal firearms problems. The co-ordinated efforts of the Gun Task Force also uncovered a growing subculture of gang-related activity, and thus the Gang Task Force came to fruition.

In 2003, the units were amalgamated to form the Gun and Gang Task Force. During this period, the unit also embarked upon its first major case to address street gangs as organized crime (under Section 467 of the Criminal Code). Upon the heels of several successful major cases and daily enforcement efforts, the unit evolved into what is now the Integrated Gun and Gang Task Force (IGGTF).

Integrated effort

The IGGTF is now one of the largest units in the TPS. It is also one of the largest units in the country that deals with the many issues associated with organized crime enforcement — particularly that of organized criminal street gangs.

IGGTF operations consist of the combined efforts of four subsections. There are six Daily Enforcement Teams, a Gang Investigative Support section, a Major Projects section (Part VI "wiretap" investigations), and the Firearms Investigations and Analysis Unit. This latter unit conducts expert examinations, verifications and investigative support for all firearms seizures and related occurrences in the TPS.

The Daily Enforcement Teams are truly integrated, having the support of three members of the RCMP and six members of the Ontario Provincial Police who are seconded from the Provincial Weapons Enforcement Unit. The integrated members work directly with the TPS members, addressing and supporting the TPS mandate to improve community safety. The Daily Enforcement Teams support all of the specialized units of the TPS — including the Homicide Squad and the Hold Up Squad — with surveillance, enforcement and complex investigative resources.

The evolution of the IGGTF has cultivated a vast amount of investigative experience garnered through a commitment to 24-hour response and support to all violent gang- and firearms-related incidents. The experience and intelligence gathered through daily investigations, and through the hundreds of thousands of intercepted communications via the Major Projects section, has placed the investigators in a unique and very informed position to address the climate of street violence often caused by organized criminal street gangs.

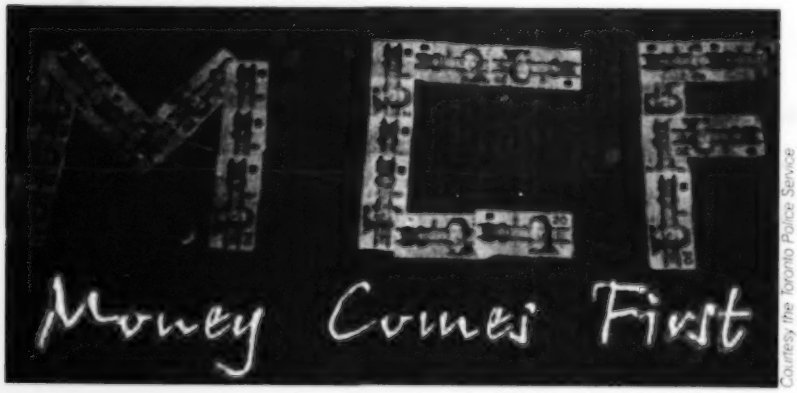
Greed trumps territory

The City of Toronto has over 140 documented and known gangs that operate within the municipal boundaries. However, criminal street gangs are dynamic and continuously evolving. While 75 of these gangs remain somewhat consistent in their activities, about 20 to 25 of them are on the radar at all times. It is these 20 to 25 gangs that present the strongest threat to community safety and require the most attention for current policing initiatives.

The criminal enterprises of organized criminal street gangs are vast and varied. These gangs are into advanced networks of drug distribution (import export cultivation), armed robberies, weapons trafficking, vehicle thefts, sophisticated frauds, identity theft, and extreme acts of violence including shootings and homicides.

Most gangs in Toronto are territorially based. However, there is a growing trend in the mobility of these larger gangs as

MCF or Money Comes First illustrates the gang subculture philosophy. This photo comes from a Southeast Asian gang that adopted the North American gangsta culture.



Courtesy the Toronto Police Service

their criminal endeavours such as drug dealing require them to move about the GTA. This also creates a greater propensity for conflict as rivals may clash over control of disputed territory and illicit clientele. The gangs in the Toronto area are also changing dynamically in that there is a trend away from traditional, more ethnically based gangs. The gangs have grown in membership and possess a mentality that is driven more by financial or material needs, as well as a desire for notoriety.

The underlying principles and motivators behind all gangs are money, power and respect. The gang subculture is heavily influenced by pop culture and multimedia sources. In turn, the gang subculture also heavily influences those media. The money–power–respect principle fuels the expansion of turf and criminal activity and is also the root cause of most of the overt aggression that results in the shootings and homicides that plague many communities.

Where there is a market for gangs to operate, they will find a way to capitalize on the opportunities. Those who can provide the necessary tools and resources for the gang to succeed will benefit most, gaining the power and respect of their own membership and that of rivals alike. Gangs are not a new phenomenon. They have existed in many forms over many generations. They continue to employ the tactics of fear and intimidation to further their goals.

Sharing insight

As mentioned previously, gangs are expanding beyond their territorial bases to increase the capability of their members to drive the financial engine. In several surrounding GTA urban areas, gangs are capable of running sophisticated drug and fraud operations at the same time. Hence, many neighbouring police agencies have seen an influx of gang-related crime in their jurisdictions.

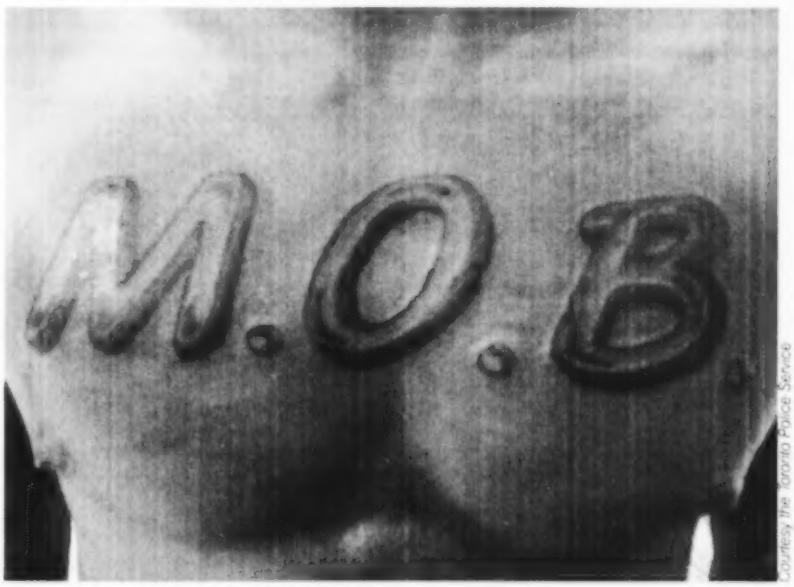
One of the greatest challenges in policing gang activity is the need for current and accurate intelligence as these operations grow, expand and evolve. It is absolutely essential that gang intelligence and gang enforcement units enhance their capacity to share information and support each others' investigations. All policing units must enhance their efforts at documenting, sourcing and sharing their intelligence and experience in a timely and organized fashion.

Gangs are expanding beyond their territorial bases to increase the capability of their members to drive the financial engine.

As the scope and scale of criminal gang activity evolves in urban and rural areas, municipal boundaries become less important. Turf or territory struggles will always be a root cause of violence, but the mobility of modern gangs becomes a greater problem for officer and community safety as the gang members pass through our respective jurisdictions, carrying out their business — and make no mistake, it is business to them.

Although almost every police service has its own definition and criteria for identifying gang-related crime, the same five or six identifiers — such as observed behaviour in gang activity or possession of gang paraphernalia — are often used. Also, there are extreme resource and budget limitations in most regions when it comes to specific gang enforcement abilities. Thus, common sense and co-operation, combined with a commitment to properly document, source and share useful information, will allow each police service to effectively identify its gang problems and, ultimately, better understand and address the safety of its communities. ■

M.O.B. in gang culture has a few meanings: Member of Bloods, Murderer of Bloods (some Crips may sport this tattoo) or Money over Bitches, which is usually inked on skin on a vertical plane.



Courtesy the Toronto Police Service

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Street gangs: a federal correctional perspective

By Luciano Bentenuto
Correctional Service of Canada

Gangs and organized crime bring new challenges to the correctional system in Canada. Legislation to combat organized crime, along with the proactive approach adopted by law enforcement agencies and the increasingly successful prosecutions of organized crime cases, has resulted in a greater number of gang members or affiliates serving sentences of two or more years in federal penitentiaries.

Demographics

In the past few years, much attention has been given to outlaw motorcycle gangs (OMGs) and traditional organized crime entities. However, with the emergence of street gangs and other similar groups such as Aboriginal gangs, the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) has seen quite a change in its offender population, particularly gang demographics.

There are now 55 different types of gangs under CSC jurisdiction. As of December 30, 2007, there were 1,882 offenders identified as either members or associates of criminal organizations. The majority had gang affiliations before they were incarcerated. Of those 1,882 offenders, 66 per cent were incarcerated and 34 per cent were under some form of community supervision. Initial estimates suggest that the number of offenders who have gang affiliations will increase by approximately five to 10 per cent within the next two years.

Within the same group, 548 offenders were identified as members or affiliates of Aboriginal gangs, the largest gang group within CSC. Eighty-six percent of this group are serving their sentences within the Prairie region. Meanwhile, the number of offenders affiliated with street gangs (as opposed to OMGs and other organized crime groups) has increased by 119 per cent, from 213 members in 2000 to 467 in 2007. Street gangs now represent a slightly larger group than OMGs.

Challenges

The constant growth of gangs within the correctional realm has created a number of challenges for CSC:

- power and control issues stemming from intimidation, extortion and violence within the incarcerated and supervised community populations
- incompatibilities and rivalries among various group,
- drug distribution within institutions and continued criminal links with outside criminal organizations
- maximum security capacity to address the growing number of convictions for serious crimes that are gang-related

Initial estimates suggest that the number of offenders who have gang affiliations will increase by approximately five to 10 per cent within the next two years.

From 2003 to 2006, there was a 50 per cent increase in the number of offenders admitted to federal custody with weapons offences who were also affiliated with gangs.

CSC has adopted a multi-pronged approach to deal with the gang phenomenon. Its key objectives include the following:

- recognizing that criminal organizations pose a serious threat to the safe, secure, orderly and efficient management and operations of our institutions and community operational units
- ensuring that all actions are based on approved correctional policy
- affirming our intolerance for acts of violence and other criminal activities committed by criminal organization members and their associates, either in our institutions or in the community while the offenders are on conditional release

Risk management

CSC uses an Intelligence-Led Risk Management (ILRM) model, in which intelligence serves to guide operations focusing on preventive and proactive initiatives designed to manage risks within the daily correctional operations. ILRM acknowledges that risks are typically inherent to managing offenders within the correctional realm, particularly when these offenders are affiliated with criminal organizations.

ILRM's ultimate goal is to improve efficiency in responding to security threats by giving institutional security intelligence officers and their counterparts in the community increased intelligence gathering, analysis and dissemination capabilities. It also promotes an inter-jurisdictional partnership in which information can safely be shared with our law enforcement partners, including the Criminal Intelligence Service Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the National Parole Board.

Gang population management

Although CSC promotes integration among offenders, the complexity of gang dynamics and the variations in gang structures do not allow for a one-size-fits-all gang management strategy. Existing gang rivalries and

incompatibility issues may force CSC to resort to segregating certain gangs.

There have been some situations in which opposing gangs must be separated in order to effectively manage operations. When this occurs, gangs are housed in separate units to minimize and prevent contact and avoid potential gang-related incidents. However, separation is not always a realistic approach to dealing with gangs. Correctional officials assess each situation individually and develop approaches and interventions at the local level, in order to effectively ensure safety in institutions within our community.

As well, CSC provides all gang members with an opportunity to disaffiliate from their gangs and appropriate measures are taken to prevent gang members from exercising influence and power in our institutions and in the community. For those offenders who are not affiliated with any criminal organizations or who have disaffiliated themselves from such groups, the focus is on preventing them from engaging in activities that predispose them to possible recruitment or initiation into a gang.

Prevention, intervention, suppression

The correctional gang management strategy is one that needs to remain flexible enough to accommodate the gang phenomenon and that focuses on the individuals and the groups to which they belong. This means developing multiple strategies that use prevention, intervention and suppression models.

It is estimated that 92 per cent of federal offenders under CSC jurisdiction are not gang members or affiliates. Consequently, the majority of programs or initiatives developed to address offender needs focus on prevention.

Conclusion

There's no question that the issue of gang management within corrections remains a complex one, and that the implications are certainly broad. The expected increase in the number of offenders identified as either belonging to or being affiliated with criminal groups will continue to put pressure on current resources, as these offenders pose various challenges to our direct operations.

Nevertheless, CSC remains committed to the collective effort by all law enforcement agencies in Canada to provide Canadians with a safe and secure environment absent of gangs and gang-related violence. ■

It is estimated that 92 per cent of federal offenders under CSC jurisdiction are not gang members or affiliates. Consequently, the majority of programs or initiatives developed to address offender needs focus on prevention.

Got a gang problem?

Go beyond enforcement, says one expert

The gang issue can affect any community, be it a large metropolitan city or a small rural town. Although the scope and nature of each problem is unique, many of the strategies to deal with the problems are the same. Tony Moreno, a former member of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), has more than 30 years experience in gang enforcement and training. He explores the ways in which police in any community can succeed in preventing and disrupting street gangs.

By Tony Moreno

The greatest difference between the gang problem of the 1970s and 1980s and the problem as it exists today is that it now affects a larger segment of society. There was a time when gangs were thought to exist only in large metropolitan cities like New York and Los Angeles. It was also believed to be a problem associated with the lower income areas of large urban cities and the ethnic or minority groups living in them.

The general attitude toward the gang situation was that it wasn't a major problem because it affected only "those people" in "those areas." Although this was not a complete or accurate picture, it was a commonly held belief and it enabled a large section of society to look the other way and not deal with the issue. As a law enforcement officer who has conducted gang training in Canada and the United States, I have seen this same denial in Canada, where some people believe the problem belongs only to large American cities.

It's evident that the gang problem exists in urban, suburban and rural areas of our communities, and it cuts across all racial, ethnic and cultural lines. Some communities have a more serious gang problem than their neighbours do, but the problem can exist and thrive anywhere.

Root causes

The best way to deal with gangs is to prevent kids from joining them in the first place. This means looking at the reasons why kids join gangs: substandard family life, problems in school, a lack of discipline and supervision, and the lure of negative influences. A good example of a program that works to prevent gang involvement is a homework club operated by the Ottawa Police Service and the Boys and Girls Club of Ottawa. The program focuses on a time of day when many young people are out of school but lack adequate supervision because their parents are at work. The club provides students with a place to hang out after school and supports them in their educational endeavours.

Community partners

As police officers, we sometimes forget that there are other forces in the community that deal with the same problems. By acknowledging and respecting the various roles and working as a cohesive, united front, we can better attack the gang

problem. This means police officers should work alongside fellow professionals from educational and medical associations, social service groups and community-based organizations. Getting to know each other and gaining respect and an understanding for our diverse roles are critical steps in solving these problems.

Because gangs and gang members are fluid and tend to move and conduct criminal activity in multiple areas, police agencies also need to be flexible and maintain a network of fellow professionals from various areas of policing. This includes establishing and maintaining positive working relationships with national, provincial and local law enforcement agencies. This collaborative approach is one of the reasons that the task force model of multiple agencies working as one has been so successful in dealing with gangs. Dealing with gangs on the front line also requires police to have solid contacts in corrections, parole/probation and the judicial system.

Assessing the problem

It's not an easy thing for many communities to admit they have a gang problem. It can damage the reputation of the community or city, create a negative stigma and even affect property values. No one wants it in their backyard. The most responsible and effective measure is to accurately assess the problem. This can be done by gathering information on the gang activity and supporting the information with documentation. Establishing that a gang exists, that gang members are in the community and that they have connections to criminal activity requires documentation such as crime reports, arrest reports, field interview reports, photographs, intelligence reports, court documents and incident reports.

When policing a community that is in denial, it doesn't hurt to prepare for the day when the gang problem can no longer be ignored. If there is a legitimate problem, it will not go away on its own. Eventually, there will be a crime or significant incident, and police should be ready.

Magnets for knowledge

Among the law enforcement officers I have worked with over the years, the ones who were the most effective at dealing with gangs shared one particular trait: they were masters at developing, processing and utilizing information.

Whether it's in a large metropolitan city or on the outskirts of a remote detachment, the gang problem will be specific to each locale. Reaching into the community and developing information on gangs and criminal activity makes an officer invaluable to the organization, because not just anyone can do those jobs. The best "gang cops" have information coming from victims, witnesses, citizens in the community, fellow professionals, gang members themselves and any other person with something to share. When it comes to gangs, be an information magnet. Also, the more you know, the safer you are.

Prevention, intervention, enforcement

As police officers, we understand the importance of strong enforcement efforts in the fight against gangs. But what has become apparent in places like Los Angeles is that enforcement alone is not enough. As one wise man (retired Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Sgt Wes McBride) said, "we can't arrest our way out of this problem." Aggressive, effective police work is being accomplished in many communities and gang members are being sent to our prisons in great numbers. Unless actual rehabilitation is being accomplished while they are in custody, these gang members are simply returning to our communities as more effective and committed gang members.

Tony Moreno

The LAPD's specialized Citywide Field Unit arrests a "Rolling 30s Crip" gang member wanted in connection with multiple armed robberies.

In our communities — even those with only an emerging gang problem — there will be kids and young adults at various stages of actual or potential gang membership. The effective response is to have the ability and the resources to stop kids from joining gangs or to step in and provide alternatives to disrupt gang membership. The factors and root causes of gang membership for each individual will differ from person to person. The progressive, multi-dimensional response must include prevention, intervention and enforcement components.

Modern-day police officers can be catalysts in the fight against gang violence and criminal activity by openly taking the lead in the resistance against gangs and all that they represent. Being the leaders in the community against gangs also puts police at the greatest risk. Attempting to grapple with a gang problem can be an extremely challenging and frustrating job, and there is no magic potion or "gang guru" with all the answers. The gang problem is much more complex than that.

What we do have is us — the foot soldiers in this battle against gangs. Your law enforcement counterparts in Toronto, Yellowknife, Winnipeg or Los Angeles are busy working to make their community safer in their own way. The more you understand the gang problem in your area, the more effective and safer you will be. Your community, your organization and your loved ones will benefit from that. ■

Unless actual rehabilitation is being accomplished while they are in custody, these gang members are simply returning to our communities as more effective and committed gang members.

The Central American *maras*

Imported gang culture fuels Central American violence

By Héctor Lombardo Morales Rodriguez
Assistant Prosecutor,
Public Prosecutor's Office
Guatemala

At the beginning of the 1980s, most Central American countries were embroiled in civil wars fuelled by opposing political ideologies and foreign intervention. These conflicts resulted in thousands of deaths and the migration of large numbers of Central Americans to North America, primarily the United States, where they began to adopt western customs. Young migrants in particular began to identify with the music, culture and habits of North American youth.

The subsequent forced return of significant numbers of these displaced persons to their more conservative, traditional home countries gave rise to groups of youths who appeared "alien" to ordinary Central American citizens, most of whom were preoccupied with the harsh social and political realities of everyday life.

Despite the fact that these "alien" groups were becoming better organized and had begun to engage in low-level criminality such as theft and property offences, the groups were largely shrugged off by authorities, who viewed them as a passing trend linked to the customs imported by people who had previously fled the country. Violent crimes such as homicides and activities characteristic of organized crime were only sporadic at the time.

In the United States, on the other hand, the organization of Central Americans and Mexicans into so-called street gangs was far more advanced. Their presence and notoriety in that country gained such magnitude that the authorities — reacting to public and media pressure — began to target organized groups of youths who were committing crimes and violently defending their streets from rival gangs. In the meantime, the gang culture continued to spread within various Latin American immigrant communities, primarily those located in the cities of Miami, Chicago, Los Angeles and New York, and generally in the states of the eastern and western seaboards.

However, the response by U.S. authorities was late in coming. By the time anti-immigrant sentiment and policy translated into a concerted crackdown against gangs, the 18th Street Gang (Mara 18) and Mara Salvatrucha 13 (MS 13) were firmly entrenched. In the early 1990s, when the first Central Americans — mostly Guatemalans, Salvadorans and Hondurans — were deported from the United States back to their countries of origin, a large number of gang members and at-risk youth went with them.

These individuals returned to marginalized slum neighbourhoods, where a lack of public planning, weak public security and weak policing agencies enabled the MS 13 and Mara 18 gangs to win followers and create groups who identified strongly with their *barrios*, or neighbourhoods. These individuals proceeded to commit crimes of extreme violence, including homicide, rape and extortion. They also began to operate jointly with organized crime groups, aiding and abetting these groups and acting with virtually no constraints, short of being killed.

The problem became more acute in the late 1990s and the beginning of the millennium. In the marginalized outskirts of the cities — where poverty is the common denominator for resident families — the *maras* gained permanent control over most commercial, religious and social activities. Working people who resisted gang control and intimidation, or who refused to meet the terms of extortion demands, were often forced to abandon their homes under threat of death. As a result, the value of human life has degenerated to such a degree that a simple citizen — unable to pay the equivalent of two or three dollars a week demanded by the gang members controlling the milieu — may be summarily executed. In addition, young people living in these neighbour-

Gang members in Guatemala have easy access to drugs, even in jail.

Lombardo Rodriguez

hoods are wrested from their families and forced to join *clicas* (local sections of the gangs) from the age of eight or nine.

Major challenges for police

While the gang phenomenon is yet to be fully understood, the investigation of gangs and their membership presents enormous challenges. It is clear that gang members espouse a unified ideology and comprise a brotherhood within a section or *clica* of the gang; however, it is inconceivable how one member of MS 13 managed to rack up a record of 30 homicides and 25 rapes — not to mention innumerable property offences and crimes against individual freedoms — without being stopped. It is hard to fathom the emotional havoc wreaked on each of the families that lost one or more relatives at the hands of this individual, who either killed these people personally or indirectly caused their deaths by forcing them to join the *clica*.

Policing systems must come to terms with their failure to comprehend and adequately respond to the gang phenomenon. In Guatemala, authorities lack a comprehensive, planned, preventive approach. There is no task force dedicated to understanding and tackling the problem at the root. Instead, enforcement measures have been hurried and haphazard, often leading to excesses such as torture. Far from solving the underlying problem, such unbridled enforcement has in fact resulted in a further loss of respect for and mistrust of the authorities.

The ineffectiveness of the current approach is evidenced by the dearth of prosecutions of gang members responsible for crimes. Databases of tactical and strategic intelligence are not being exploited as they should be. Notwithstanding the major hurdles encountered in fighting these groups, existing databases should be used to mount effective surveillance of criminal operations. A number of points of vulnerability have been identified and should be exploited to eliminate gangs in their formative stages. Such concerted actions would discourage desperate authorities from resorting to retributive mechanisms such as torture, which only serve to bolster the ideology of hate and violence and entrench the gang archetype for new generations about to join the *maras'* ranks.

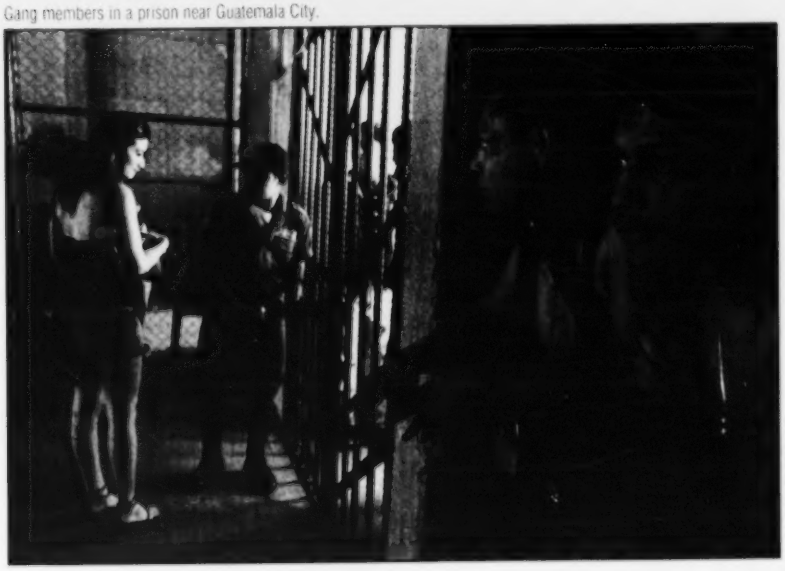
There are indeed efforts being made to seriously study the origins of the gang problem, with a view to finding viable alternatives to prevent generations of at-risk youth in marginalized areas from being drawn into gangs. The hope is that this work will assist in better comprehending the true magnitude and raison d'être of these gangs which, despite their seemingly intractable nature, are misunderstood by the institutions charged with administering justice and by society at large. It is time for the analysis to move beyond a mere recounting of the atrocious crimes committed by gangs, as that approach contributes nothing to the ultimate resolution of the problem. ■

Translated from Spanish to English by Roger Barany and Cal Deedman.

Isabel Munoz

An MS 13 gang member displays a hand sign for his gang.

Gang members in a prison near Guatemala City.



Lombardo Rodriguez

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Websites

Hotlist of Youth Gang Resources

http://mail.nvnet.org/~cooper_j/YouthGangWQSite/resources.htm

National Gang Crime Research Centre

www.ngcrc.com

Comparing street gangs in France and Canada

By Christophe Soullez
Criminologist, Institut National des Hautes Études de Sécurité
France

Street gangs have a long history in France. The *blousons noirs*, Zulu gangs, skinheads from extreme-right splinter groups, and others have often made headlines. If we go back a bit further in our country's history, we see that groups of bandits plundered the countryside and brigands in the "Court of Miracles" — an impoverished area in the heart of Paris — were already sowing the seeds of urban group crime. This type of crime is often juvenile, and always corrupt.

In our collective consciousness, street gangs consist mainly of young, unemployed men who, because of their inactivity and sometimes marginal behaviour, are perceived as threatening and liable to commit crime at the drop of a hat.

While gangs can sometimes be a means for adolescents to get together and share hobbies, discuss the subjects of youth and escape family restrictions, gangs become a social concern when they engage in illegal activities, serve as a front for crime or promote anti-establishment behaviour.

This latter type of gang was introduced in contemporary France in the 1980s when the first car fires and confrontations with police occurred. Over the past 27 years, gangs have developed out of so-called "sensitive" neighbourhoods (identified by the presence of large groups, local deterioration, high unemployment and the problematic living conditions of residents).

Today, France must deal with increasingly organized groups — even if their planning remains rudimentary, the gangs are increasingly strategic during confrontations with police. Today's gangs also have a hard core defined by strong anti-social rejection and sustained criminal activity.

Common trends

Although not identical, both France and Canada are seeing some trends that are at least comparable. The two countries have experienced an increase in gang development and crime that is now perceived as commonplace. The rapid development of gangs is a growing problem for both federal and provincial Canadian authorities, while in France, police are concerned about the increased power of the many territorial gangs that are particularly characterized by increased use of violence. Both countries have also seen an increase in crimes committed by juveniles.

Both countries have witnessed crimes committed by groups of individuals who identify with certain ethnic communities. In Canada, specifically in Quebec, criminal motorcycle gangs (particularly the Hells Angels) bring together Caucasian criminals, while street gangs are mostly made up of Hispanics from the United States or Central America, Afro-Americans, Canadian Aboriginals, Jamaicans or Haitians.

In France, gang members represent the sociological makeup of the neighbourhoods in which they live. Police and criminologists have recently observed the development of ethnically homogeneous gang structures mainly involving juveniles of sub-Saharan African origin. This evolution stems as much from these individuals' desire to associate with people from the same community as from the fact that the majority of gang members live in homogeneous neighbourhoods. We cannot help but be worried by this evolution, and by the

beginnings of criminal activity that is "legitimized" by an anti-West dialogue.

The recent evolution of gangs in France and Canada is also characterized by increased violence during criminal activity and gang fights. In France more specifically, confrontations between juveniles and police officers have become extremely commonplace. Any confrontation is liable to generate violence directed toward police officers or other targets such as rival gang members, neighbourhood residents or victims of robbery. The riots in Villiers-le-Bel in November 2007 and the use of firearms against police illustrate this increased violence.*

In both countries, there are stronger, tighter ties between territorial gangs and traditional crime. In France, the increasing presence of weapons and attack dogs, as well as the more frequent settling of accounts among drug dealers, has become key to territorial sanctuary. Consolidating certain drug deals on certain territories leads to specific violence that is very difficult for police to control. Drug-dealing neighbourhoods have reached a certain level of sophistication, and violence stems from intensified "commercial" tension between dealers and the need to defend territory. Each gang controls the crime in its territory with its own organization, and without a middleman.

In France, most gang members are second-generation immigrants, aged between 25 and 35 years old, who, over the past 15 years, have grown up in neighbourhoods where crime is encouraged. As youth, they participated in the urban violence of the 1990s, then gradually started committing more structured criminal acts. In most cases, the gang initiation rituals or signs of belonging used in the United States or Canada have not yet been seen in these networks.

The majority of modern gangs in France and Canada can also be defined by a galaxy-type structure with concentric circles. Within each circle, members have very specific functions. Belonging to any one circle depends upon age — younger gang members act as lookouts, for example — or merit — an excellent drug seller can integrate into a circle closer to the nerve centre and therefore be given other missions and more remuneration.

The versatility of this crime structure sets it apart from other more traditional crime groups. Criminals coming from troubled neighbourhoods are involved in all types of delinquency (including cargo robbery, narcotics transportation, kidnapping and racketeering) or drugs.

Inside these sometimes unstable but essentially criminal gangs, many French youths are inspired by the group and participate in both gang activities and urban violence or anti-institutional acts. However, in territories where the underground economy is deeply rooted and dealers need a calm environment to prosper, urban violence is rarely found and remains a secondary symptom that is quickly controlled by neighbourhood leaders.

Diverging trends

Beyond these common observations, there are two main differences between street gangs in Canada and street gangs in France.

In Canada, there are more than 300 identified street gangs and their activity mainly involves earning money. France is sure to have many more than 300 gangs, simply due to the fact that each sensitive neighbourhood has at least one gang that seeks to control its territory. France has 650 urban neighbourhoods classified as sensitive, so we can deduce that the metropolitan area would have between 600 and 700 gangs.

That said, the majority of French gangs limit their criminal influence to their own territory and have not yet demonstrated a desire to expand and acquire more control. Contrary to some Canadian or American street "mega-gangs," whose members work the whole territory with a view to increasing the range of their dealings and controlling more major neighbourhoods, French gangs still limit themselves to local crime.

The second major difference between Canada and France concerns the type of urban violence. Urban violence does not exist in Canada in the same way it has in France for the past 25 years. Canadian street gangs strive to do business and make money illegally. In France, the sole purpose of urban violence is to reject institutional players and encourage confrontation with law enforcement.

Some countries may experience violent incidents similar to those in France — for example, incidents between youth and authorities stemming from run-ins between young people and the police. But daily urban violence — which can include the daily harassment of foreign residents in the country — remains a French reality that is slowly spreading to other European countries. ■

Christophe Soullez is co-author of Violences et insécurité urbaines *[Urban violence and insecurity] and* Les stratégies de la sécurité *[Security strategies] (Presses Universitaires de France, 2007).*

* Riots broke out in Villiers-le-Bel, a commune in the suburbs of northern Paris, after two youths died in an accident with a police car. Rioters fired at police and torched buildings and cars.

Youth gangs in France

Confronting the situation in the suburbs of Lyons

By Richard Pla
Chief of Police in Vénissieux/
Saint-Fons, France

In Vénissieux, a city of 57,000 inhabitants located just outside Lyons, France, some 20,000 residents live in a sensitive housing project (*cité*) called Les Minguettes.

Les Minguettes was the scene of France's first urban riots back in 1981. This decades-old incident — combined with a violent outbreak in another Lyons suburb in 1990, and more recent clashes in the past three years — has sparked extensive media coverage of France's so-called sensitive urban zones and the youth gangs who live there. The French National Police, along with political and institutional authorities, remain steadfast in their efforts to grapple with the youth gang problem.

In Les Minguettes, police face some neighbourhood-specific issues. Police in Vénissieux are focussing on two complementary approaches in an effort to gain the upper hand: adapting their internal structure and processes, and developing an operational partnership with local authorities.

New structures and processes

Internally, Vénissieux police have created an additional night shift of plainclothes officers who ride in unmarked vehicles. The primary mission of this team, which is made up of daytime employees, is to fight urban violence and crime via patrols, cold surveillance and intervention in flagrant offences.

Authorities have also put together a team of legal experts tasked with investigating specific incidents of urban violence, such as vehicle torchings or projectiles thrown at institutional representatives.

The Vénissieux police station has hired a full-time social worker who works on-site to greet complainants and deal with persons facing difficult situations.

In day-to-day operations, police units are seeking to gain greater control of their jurisdictions. While not all-encompassing, this effort is leading to long-term action in several areas. For instance, the number of arrests for drug offences has quadrupled in the past five years.

Other ongoing efforts include regularly checking drinking establishments and securing sensitive locations such as urban transit and common areas in buildings. Police efforts to combat the underground economy — and more specifically the drug trade — are the surest way to fight the influence of *cité* gangs.

Operational partnership

As for the development of an operational partnership, support from the local Security and Crime Prevention Council is key.

The council includes the mayor, the prefect for security and defence, the local prosecutor, elected municipal officials, and representatives from the National Police, fire departments, and agencies responsible for national education, urban transportation and social housing. The council holds plenary sessions two or three times a year, and their decisions are carried out by various task forces.

The council holds a meeting called the "Public Services Point" every Monday morning at city hall. This meeting allows institutional partners to exchange information and identify adequate solutions to specific problems.

Because arson attacks on vehicles are a major concern, authorities give specific attention to this type of crime. The National Police can count on support from the local prosecutor to ensure appropriate legal response for arson incidents. The municipality and landlords have also joined forces to identify and remove car wrecks that are vulnerable to being burned and to install a video surveillance system.

Lombardo Rodriguez

In Les Minguettes, a public housing project built on a 220-hectare plateau above Vénissieux, France, youth gangs present a problem for local residents and police.

Securing sensitive locations — such as the mall in Les Minguettes, the market, subway stations and common areas in buildings — is another partnership initiative. Co-operation with landlords is especially fruitful. Major landlords have come together to create a service that enables them to send response teams into buildings where common areas are being overtaken by youth gangs.

In Les Minguettes, the most notorious gang hangout area has been targeted for joint police landlord operations. Landlords contact parents of problem youth, making them aware of their responsibilities and warning them that the youth will be evicted if the situation persists. No one has been evicted yet, but interventions of this nature have helped to identify gang members and hangouts, and to isolate and weaken ringleaders by removing their less determined followers.

No single entity — including the National Police — will be able to change Vénissieux's gang situation on its own. Authorities need a true operational partnership. Authorities also need the support of the people. In this regard, police have begun explaining their actions to the community by attending meetings organized by neighbourhood councils and landlords. ■

Just the facts

Human trafficking – the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons for the purposes of exploitation – is a growing criminal enterprise. Millions of victims worldwide are forced, coerced or deceived into lives as prostitutes, manual labourers, domestic workers – even organ donors and child soldiers – and traffickers are cashing in big-time. Here's a look at the facts.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that there are between two and four million victims of human trafficking worldwide at any given time.

Research completed by the U.S. Department of State in 2006 indicates that approximately 800,000 people are trafficked between countries each year, but most victims are trafficked within their own countries.

Some 80 per cent of transnational trafficking victims are women and girls and up to 50 per cent are minors.

Trafficked victims are most often forced into sex work (32 per cent), construction (17 per cent), entertainment/dancing/bartending (13 per cent) and agriculture (12 per cent).

From 2003 to 2006, the U.S. Department of State recorded a total of 27,303 human trafficking prosecutions and 13,766 convictions, worldwide.

Human trafficking activities generate some $32 billion US annually, according to the United Nations. Only drug trafficking generates higher criminal profits.

A typical trafficker relocates his victims every 15 to 30 days.

Most traffickers are the same nationality as their victims and usually have no criminal records.

The majority of customers for trafficked children are transient males — particularly military personnel, truck drivers, seasonal workers, conventioneers and sex tourists — according to a report by the RAND Corporation and the Ohio Chiefs of Police.

A "considerable percentage" of the erotic services ads posted on Craigslist.org advertise trafficked women and children, according to research by the Polaris Project against slavery.

The Scotland Yard notes that trafficked women from Eastern Europe are a "predominant feature" of the off-street prostitution trade in Soho, London.

In the U.S., a medium-sized Korean-operated massage parlor that exploits trafficked victims might earn up to $1.17 billion per year. A brothel would earn even more.

The RCMP estimates that 600 people are trafficked into Canada each year for sexual exploitation and at least 800 for all domestic markets. An additional 1,500 to 2,200 people are trafficked from Canada into the United States.

Human trafficking is linked to major international sporting events — Greek authorities saw a 95 per cent increase in the number of trafficking cases in 2004, the year Greece hosted the Summer Olympics.

Traffickers in industrialized countries make an average of $67,200 US per trafficked sex worker per year, according to the ILO.

Human trafficking is not the same as human smuggling. Smuggled individuals willingly consent to travel across borders and are usually free upon arrival in the destination country.

SOURCES: International Labour Organization: **www.ilo.org** ; U.S. Department of State, Trafficking in Persons Report: **www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/** ; International Organization for Migration: **www.iom.int** ; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime: **www.unodc.org** ; National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Human Trafficking Facts: **www.ncadv.org** ; National Institute of Justice: **www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/topics/crime/human-trafficking/welcome.htm** ; RAND Corporation: **www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG689/** ; University of Rhode Island: **www.uri.edu/artsci/wms/hughes/pubtrfrep.htm** ; Department of Justice Canada: **justice.gc.ca/en/ps/rs/rep/2006/rr06-3/table.html** ; The Future Group, "Faster, Higher, Stronger: Preventing Human Trafficking at the 2010 Olympics:" **www.thefuturegroup.org**

Assessing lethality in domestic violence cases

Program helps first responders save lives

By David M. Sargent and
Jacquelyn C. Campbell, PhD, RN

According to a 2001 study in the journal *Preventive Medicine*, police officers were called to the scene of 50 per cent of domestic violence homicides.* The study also found that only four per cent of domestic violence murder victims had ever used the services of a domestic violence provider. In a different sample of victims who had gone into shelters, the rate of re-assault dropped by a staggering 60 per cent.

As a law enforcement community — and a co-ordinated community — we can respond to these statistics by turning them into opportunities to save the lives of potential domestic homicide victims. In the state of Maryland, we started with the question, "What can we do?"

In 2003, the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) received a grant to establish a lethality assessment instrument and accompanying protocol, both of which would help assess the risk that a victim of domestic violence would be killed by his or her partner.

Because lethality assessment is generally applied in a clinical setting, the MNADV sought to develop an assessment tool for first responders, primarily law enforcement officers. The initiative is called the Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) for First Responders.

To ensure professional methodology, the MNADV organized a Lethality Assessment Committee comprised of law enforcement officers, criminal justice system practitioners, domestic violence advocates, and researchers — including the authors.

The committee developed an 11-question assessment tool, called the Lethality Screen for First Responders. The screen is based on the professionally respected Danger Assessment for identifying the danger in domestic violence cases (www.dangerassessment.org). It is a straightforward questionnaire that allows responding officers to predict, with a high degree of accuracy, both the danger and the potential of lethality for victims of domestic violence situations. Responding officers use the screen to ask such questions as "Has he/she threatened to kill you or your children?" and "Has he/she ever tried to choke you?"

Infusing a belief in empowering victims with a sense of urgency, the committee then developed the LAP protocol, basing its work on the experience of its membership and over 25 years of available research. The protocol encourages victims identified as "high risk" for domestic violence fatalities to seek the services of a domestic violence program. The protocol espouses the victim-defined advocacy model of safety planning and allows a flexible approach to implementing the Lethality Screen.

The hallmark of the protocol is this: if the Lethality Screen identifies a victim as being in "high danger," the police officer making that assessment calls the local domestic violence hotline from the scene.

Although officers traditionally refer victims to domestic violence service providers, the victims seldom make the call.

In the LAP protocol, the officer calls the hotline to seek advice and — equally important — to encourage the victim to speak to the hotline counsellor. Additionally, the officer tells the victim that he or she is in danger and that people in similar situations have been killed (information that is hopefully eye-opening to the victim). Depending on whether or not the victim chooses to speak to the hotline counsellor, the officer proceeds with one of two responses to promote the immediate safety of the victim.

In the LAP protocol, the officer calls the hotline to seek advice and — equally important — to encourage the victim to speak to the hotline counsellor.

If the victim chooses to speak to the counsellor, the officer responds to the outcome of that telephone conversation, perhaps becoming involved in co-ordinating a safety plan with the victim and counsellor.

If the victim chooses not to speak to the

Though still early in its implementation, there are positive signs that the LAP is affecting domestic homicide statistics in the state of Maryland.

counsellor, the officer provides safety planning advice to the victim and reviews factors that are predictive of death, so the victim can be on the lookout for those factors in future. The officer encourages the victim to contact a domestic violence program, provides the victim with police contact information, and may take other actions such as advising the victim how to obtain a protection order.

The LAP in action

The Lethality Assessment Committee spent nearly a year developing the Lethality Screen and LAP protocol, and field testing them in three jurisdictions. The primary focus of field testing was to determine whether the screen and protocol were user-friendly for officers on the scene. Eighty-four per cent of officers surveyed reported that the instrument and protocol were "easy" or "fairly easy" to administer, and 50 per cent related that the tools bolstered their confidence.

The committee spent the next year gathering data, holding regional workshops to explain the LAP and obtain additional feedback, adjusting the screen, and producing a training video for police officers.

The MNADV now co-ordinates the LAP and provides a direct train-the-trainer curriculum for law enforcement agencies. It also offers an in-service curriculum for participating domestic violence service providers. Each agency and program that implements the LAP is asked to voluntarily gather and report Lethality Screen data to the MNADV on a quarterly basis. To date, all participating agencies have honored this request. The MNADV then provides all participants with quarterly and annual reports, comments and recommendations.

Each participating agency and domestic violence program appoints a lethality assessment contact who communicates with the MNADV co-ordinator and other agency/program contacts. All contacts serve on the Lethality Assessment Participants' Committee, which meets annually and communicates frequently via e-mail.

In October 2005, the LAP was voluntarily implemented by four law enforcement agencies and two partner providers in two of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions. Today, 66 police agencies (Maryland State Police included) involving 19 domestic violence programs in 21 jurisdictions have either implemented the LAP, piloted it, received LAP training or committed to go forward.

Though still early in its implementation, there are positive signs that the LAP is affecting domestic homicide statistics in the state of Maryland. The MNADV reported the following statistics during 2006 and 2007:

- Partner agencies administered 5,143 Lethality Screens across a participating population of 1.7 million.
- 57 per cent of persons screened were assessed as being in "high danger." In those jurisdictions where a police officer and domestic violence program advocate visit "high danger" victims unannounced, up to 58 per cent of visited victims sought services.
- 54 per cent of "high danger" victims spoke on the phone with a domestic violence program counsellor.
- 27 per cent of the victims who spoke on the phone went in for services.
- One screened victim was killed.
- In 2007, the number of domestic violence fatalities in Maryland was at its lowest since 1991.

Dr. Neil Websdale of the National Domestic Violence Fatality Review Initiative says that instruments such as the LAP can accomplish several outcomes, including a greater awareness of danger and lethality among victims and the law enforcement community, a greater consideration of proactive interventions, the education of system participants, the opportunity for victims to see their situations through a different lens, and enhanced co-ordination, communication and co-operation.

Maryland has recorded success in each of these areas. Participating agencies have performed consistently and have received numerous out-of-state inquiries as well as media and industry attention.

Maryland has created a program that has impacted the lives of domestic violence victims and given the domestic violence service community a proactive, reliable answer to that nagging question, "What can we do?" ■

For more information about the LAP, visit the MNADV website at ***www.mnadv.org***.

* Campbell, J., et al. *Health care providers missed opportunities for prevention for femicide*. Preventive Medicine. Vol.33 No.5 (2001), p. 373-380.

David Sargent served 21 years with the Metropolitan Police Department in Washington, D.C., and has taught domestic violence training courses to more than 7,300 police officers in D.C., Delaware, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Maryland.

Jacquelyn Campbell, BSN, MSN and PhD, is a professor in the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing and has a joint appointment at the Bloomberg School of Public Health. She has been conducting advocacy, policy work and research in the areas of family violence and health disparities related to trauma since 1980.

First on the scene

Tips for keeping evidence intact

Cpl Pat Gould
Forensic Identification Specialist
Moncton RCMP

A police officer can expect to attend any number of crime scenes, from simple break and enters to complex homicides. When an officer is the first to arrive on the scene, his or her approach and subsequent actions can make the difference between a conviction or an acquittal in court. This article offers some guidelines for first responding officers on what should be done at a crime scene to reduce the possibility of losing or destroying evidence, or having it ruled inadmissible in court.

First things first

When notified of a crime scene, make sure to record any pertinent information such as who made the call and what was said; the date, time and weather conditions; the circumstances of the complaint; and the location of the incident. This information will help you prepare for your response.

Upon arrival, record the time, date, location, persons present, weather conditions and other information from your own observations. Comprehensive notes will be helpful for subsequently providing information to investigators, forensic identification specialists and others, as well as writing reports and testifying.

When first approaching the crime scene, make continuous observations and pay attention to details. For instance, make note of whether the driveway leading to a residence is paved, dirt or snow-covered. Take care to avoid destroying tire or footwear impressions that may have been left behind. Note environmental conditions: a windy day could blow a door closed or move evidence in a yard.

Conducting a preliminary visual examination of the exterior of the crime scene is particularly important as it can uncover many types of evidence such as footwear impressions, tire impressions, cigarette butts and tools.

Fingerprints recovered from broken glass.

Cpl Pat Gould RCMP

Securing the scene

Prior to examination by a forensic identification specialist (FIS), traffic into and through a serious crime scene should be limited to those who must enter to ensure officer and public safety. When it is necessary to enter the scene, make every effort to determine the path of contamination, which is the path taken by the offender(s) to, from and through the crime scene. Once the path has been identified, avoid travelling on or crossing it in order to reduce the chance of destroying or contaminating evidence. If a perimeter is required, cordon off a large enough area to prevent loss of evidence, and permit only essential personnel to enter the scene.

To assist in determining the path of contamination once the scene has been secured — if it is necessary to travel in the scene prior to the arrival of an FIS — the first responding officer may darken the room and use oblique or low-angle lighting (45-degree angle or lower) with a flashlight to look for possible footwear impressions. These impressions should be protected until the FIS arrives and is able to examine and process the evidence.

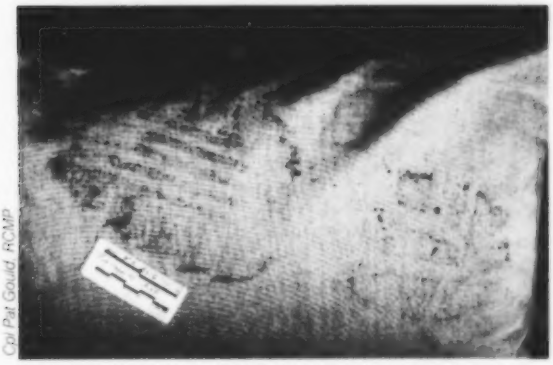
For an FIS, the point of entry yields the best physical evidence, such as fingerprints; traces of hair, fibre or DNA; footwear impressions; or tool markings. Protect the point of entry and avoid using it to enter or exit the scene until it has been examined by the FIS.

If the home or business owner is available, enquire about the last time the windows and floor at the point of entry were washed. This information is very important to establish a possible time frame for any footwear impressions or fingerprints. Also ask the home or business owner if any items have been handled or removed by the culprit(s).

Protecting evidence

Any physical evidence that you observe must be protected from possible environmental conditions — such as rain, snow or sun — and kept intact until the FIS can

Conducting a preliminary visual examination of the exterior of the crime scene is particularly important as it can uncover many types of evidence such as footwear impressions, tire impressions, cigarette butts and tools.



Cpl Pat Gould, RCMP

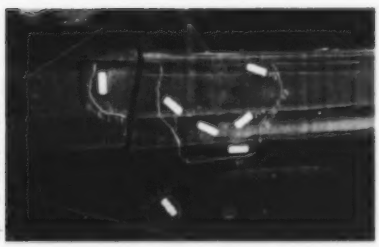
This footwear impression was left behind on a cushion at the point of entry.

photograph and examine the evidence.

In adverse weather conditions, the best practice is to place a clean covering such as a cardboard box over the physical evidence. However, this type of covering may not work for footwear or tire impressions in snow. If the sun is strong, placing a box over impressions in snow can create too much heat and actually melt the evidence. Instead, try creating a shadow over the evidence to limit sunlight. For footwear or tire impressions in muddy, rainy conditions, cover the impressions and try to limit water draining into the evidence.

Avoid handling any evidence unless absolutely necessary. If a piece of broken glass with a suspected blood stain is being exposed to rain or snow, you may have no choice but to move that evidence, as it might be the only link to the perpetrator. Wear protective gloves when handling any exhibits, and always notify the FIS of your actions when he or she arrives at the scene.

Some surfaces, such as paper and polished metals, are more amenable to retrieving fingerprint evidence than others. These fingerprints were developed on the exterior of a car door.



Cpl Pat Gould, RCMP

Never allow eating, drinking or smoking inside the crime scene.

Preventing contamination

Contamination is the altering of the scene or any evidence before the evidence has been recorded and collected. There are few ways in which a crime scene can become contaminated. Witnesses, ambulance attendants and other civilian personnel may similarly disturb the scene. Police officers entering and securing the scene may also cause contamination.

Investigators who leave the scene to deal with a suspect then return following that contact may inadvertently bring contamination or something that could be perceived as evidence into the crime scene. This could lead to an incorrect interpretation of the scene. Similarly, evidence from the scene could be transferred to a police vehicle or interview room. For these reasons, the investigator dealing with the scene should not be the same member who deals with suspects.

Trace evidence such as hair and fibres can also be transferred from person to person when police use the same cell to house suspects or the same vehicle to transport prisoners or witnesses. Although such situations may be unavoidable and cross-contamination is highly unlikely, it is important to show the court that all reasonable precautions were taken.

Gathering fingerprints

Police officers should be generally knowledgeable about the kinds of surfaces that are amenable to retrieving fingerprint evidence. Surfaces like glass, plastic bags, paper and polished metals are usually good surfaces. Fingerprint evidence on rough or dirty surfaces may be limited, but FIS members may have other techniques that can be used.

Consult the FIS before making any decision that a particular item or surface may or may not yield the possibility of fingerprint evidence.

Police officers should be generally knowledgeable about the kinds of surfaces that are amenable to retrieving fingerprint evidence.

Seizing evidence

If the investigator determines that an FIS is not required at the crime scene, items can be seized for future examination. When seizing evidence, it is very important for the investigator to wear proper protective gloves and handle all exhibits by the edges with as little contact as possible. Take detailed notes for each exhibit seized, including the date, time and location of seizure, the file number and the seizing member's initials.

Secure seized exhibits in a manner that limits friction and the possible destruction of fingerprint or DNA evidence. For instance, avoid placing a bottle to be examined for fingerprint evidence in a plastic bag.

When wet exhibits are seized (excluding fire debris), air dry the exhibits immediately in a secure location to prevent mold and mildew from forming. This includes clothing and footwear exhibits. If clothing and footwear must be seized from the suspect and the FIS is not present, photograph the suspect wearing the clothing and footwear prior to removal. Finally, note any changes to exhibits, such as spillage, seepage and mold.

By following these guidelines, police officers can limit the potential for damaging evidence or contaminating a crime scene, thus increasing the possibility of a successful investigation. ■

With assistance from RCMP Forensic Identification Operations Support Services.

Latest research in law enforcement

The following are excerpts from recent research related to justice and law enforcement. To access the full reports, please visit the website links at the bottom of each summary.

Making sense of partnerships: a study of police and public housing department collaboration for tackling drug and related problems on public housing estates

By Keith Jacobs et al. for the National Drug Law Enforcement Research Fund (Australia)

The aim of this project is to explore the realities of partnership work by focusing on collaboration between the police and housing departments to tackle problems associated with illicit drug activity and anti-social behaviour (ASB) on three Australian public housing estates.

Two important assumptions informed the project. Firstly, ASB (for example, vandalism, litter, petty crime, intimidation and noise nuisance) and drug consumption are often intertwined. Secondly, although partnerships are presented by government agencies as a model for tackling complex policy problems, there has not been an Australian empirical study examining how it is experienced by key actors within the police and housing departments.

The project was conducted over a two-year period. The findings indicate that police and housing partnerships to tackle drug-related problems are (in theory) viewed positively by both departments. However, there are a range of factors that can undermine partnership work, including lack of time, staff turnover, absence of an identifiable problem and competing interdepartmental perspectives on the appropriate modes of intervention.

In all three localities, progress following the signing of MOUs (memorandums of understanding between the police and housing departments on partnership protocols) was varied. On the positive side, the partnerships engagement enhanced the scope for networking opportunities, leading to information sharing about areas of common concern and continued support for existing arrangements such as the "Officer Next Door" program and for new initiatives such as an audit of drug and alcohol education in schools. While there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate that these collaborations had an impact on reducing crime and drug-related activity, they can be seen as part of a range of interventions, including physical renewal and community-building programs, that have led to improvements for residents.

It is important to understand that partnership practices can only achieve limited goals. The problems of illicit drug use and ASB within public housing estates are, in part, symptoms of more deep-seated causal factors such as poverty and social exclusion.

Partnership work is most effective when the causal factors are addressed as part of a wider neighbourhood management strategy. The appendix to this report provides a "good practice" guide on the issues that stem from the research.

To access the full report (Monograph Series No. 26), please visit:
www.ndlerf.gov.au/pub.php

Development of police-reported delinquency among Canadian youth born in 1987 and 1990

By Peter J. Carrington for Statistics Canada

This report examines the development over childhood and adolescence of the recorded criminal activity of two cohorts of Canadians, born in 1987 and 1990. The data are drawn from the Incident-Based Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (UCR2) for 1995 to 2005. During that period, the UCR2 received information on crime and offenders from police services in six provinces, which provided policing services to about half of the population of Canada. This is the first large-scale developmental study of delinquency in Canada based on police-reported data.

The results are generally consistent with the findings of similar research in other countries, and of earlier Canadian research based on court records. Recorded delinquency is fairly wide-

The number of children and youth involved in recorded crime increases with each year of age from very few five-year-olds to a peak of one in every 17 persons at the age of 16.

spread among Canadian teenagers. By the 18th birthday, just under one-fifth of the 1987 birth cohort — one-quarter of boys and one-eighth of girls — had been recorded by police as chargeable in a criminal incident, although not all were formally charged. The research tracked children born in 1990 from the fifth birthday, and found that very few children under 12 were recorded by police as offenders.

The number of children and youth involved in recorded crime increases with each year of age from very few five-year-olds to a peak of one in every 17 persons at the age of 16. The average number of recorded offences committed per year by offenders also increases with age, but not as dramatically as the prevalence of offenders among the population.

Most child and adolescent offenders committed very few recorded offences, which were concentrated in the less serious types of crime: minor theft and other minor property offences, and minor assaults. A majority of offenders born in 1987 committed only one recorded offence up to their 18th birthday. A minority (10 per cent) committed five or more recorded offences. These "chronic offenders" averaged 11 offences each, and were responsible as a group for almost half (46 per cent) of all recorded crime committed by members of the cohort. There was little evidence of specialization in one type of crime by the offenders in this study, and most of that was in property offences. There was no evidence of a progression by individual offenders from less to more serious types of crime.

It is difficult to draw conclusions about the duration of the delinquent and criminal careers of this population, because no information was available on their offending after the 18th birthday. Thus, we do not know whether their "delinquent careers" continued into adulthood as "criminal careers."

To access the full report, please visit:
www.statcan.ca/bsolc/english/bsolc?catno=85-561-MWE2007009

The ecosystem for organized crime

By Marcus Felson
Rutgers University

The intellectual study of organized crime suffers from at least four major distractions: (a) mixing overall analysis with the requirements of prosecution, (b) understating the diversity of criminal co-operation, (c) underestimating how crime co-operation interacts with legitimate activities, and (d) overestimating the degree of planning and sophistication needed for offender symbiosis to occur.

This paper draws from the life sciences to analyze criminal co-operation in full diversity, yet with greater clarity. In the process, the author produces 12 principles to help understand "the web of criminal co-operation." The author distinguishes public, semi-public, semi-private, and private aspects of criminal co-operation, and emphasizes the dependence of organized crime on the failure to manage public space.

The televised version of organized crime depicts highly organized people in business suits sitting around a table for meetings, with intricate co-ordination across a vast field, and a certain brilliance of mind. Scholars have long told us that the televised version of organized crime is substantially wrong — that most organized crime is much smaller in scale and co-ordination.

The interplay of many crimes produces a web of interdependence. Small time thefts lead to fencing stolen goods, providing thieves money for purchasing small amounts of illegal drugs, contributing to small-time drug dealing, feeding into large-scale drug dealing.

This web of crime co-operation exposes each crime to a larger environment, without which it cannot thrive.

These ideas lead me towards an unusual set of recommendations for understanding organized crime in society, as well as reducing it:

- Focus on the acts, not the group engaging in it.
- Divide co-operative and organized crimes into very specific types.
- Study the vast variation in criminal co-operation and organization.
- Assume minimal levels of co-operative complexity, that such crime is seldom ingenious.
- Don't follow the money; follow the physical transactions.
- Don't look for deep secrets; look for the obvious and almost obvious.
- Find out how one crime depends on another.
- Find out how crime feeds off legitimate and marginal activities.
- Tease out the sequence of events for ongoing criminal co-operation.
- Interfere with that sequence, access to the customer, or modus operandi.
- Forget the bosses; monitor and thwart the opportunity for small-time crime.
- Use situational prevention to reduce crime opportunities that feed organized crime, directly and indirectly.

It's quite a bit of work to figure out the interdependencies among many types of crime, and between criminal and legal activities. The efforts to do so increasingly pay off in finding out how to control organized criminal efforts. For example, Canadian authorities realized that marijuana growing operations depend on very large amounts of electricity, thus giving up their locations as well as providing a policy handle to close them down.

To access the full report (HEUNI Paper No. 26), please visit:
www.heuni.fi/12542.htm

Operation Sabot

Interagency co-operation at its best

By John Price

In 2006, the Canadian Forces created Canada Command as a single point of contact for domestic military support to Canadian law enforcement agencies and civil authorities. Canada Command co-ordinates Canadian Forces support in areas such as surveillance, sovereignty patrols and major public events, and works in partnership with other federal departments and agencies. In 2007, Canada Command provided equipment and resource support to the RCMP for the drug interdiction operations described below.

Good partnerships ensure successful missions. For eight years, RCMP Cpl Jean-Louis Rompré has been flying drug eradication missions aboard Canadian Forces Griffon helicopters as part of Operation Sabot.

Operation Sabot is the Canadian Forces code name for military support to RCMP-led marijuana eradication operations across Canada.

In the air, Rompré's job as a member of the drug section is to help direct ground teams from the RCMP and local police during eradication operations.

A former sailor in the Canadian Navy, Rompré has experience working with the military and has great respect for the Air Force crews with whom he now flies.

"You can ask them anything and they can push their machine and their crew to the limit to get the job done," he says.

"Some of them participated in . . . missions abroad — they have a lot of stuff to share," says Rompré. "They can adapt to any situation . . . long hours, being in the bush, machines breaking down."

Operation Sabot began in 1989 and has resulted in numerous arrests and property seizures. Over the last four years alone, more than 100,000 marijuana plants have been eradicated.

The operation serves as a good example of the increasingly popular interagency approach to security in Canada.

"When we land or work in small communities local people are always surprised to see that the RCMP, their local police force and the military can work together in order to make a difference in their small town," says Rompré.

"We go to a restaurant and it's always a good reception. We hear, 'We never thought you guys would work as a team to come and solve this problem.' "

This positive outlook about the mission and the interagency approach is reciprocated by Canadian Forces personnel involved with Operation Sabot.

An RCMP member prepares to be lowered from a Canadian Forces Sea King helicopter to investigate a possible marijuana growing operation.

RCMP

"By getting out there and doing the mission and finding and eradicating (marijuana), it's a good feeling. You're doing what you are supposed to do," says Canadian Forces Captain Frank Tos, who has flown Griffons during eradication missions.

These missions require teamwork, and integrating two teams, even ones composed of trained professionals who have worked together regularly, is not without challenges. Both organizations have had to adapt to how the other works.

"Being in the military, everybody knows the language and knows what is expected," says Tos. "When you are dealing with a partner agency, even if they are RCMP, you have to be very specific about what you want, what you are doing."

Tos believes preparation is key to success.

"Touch base with whoever you are going to be working with beforehand," says Tos. "The worst thing is when daylight's burning and you're still deciding what you want to do that day."

Rompré has learned to plan his operations as far in advance as possible and to leverage the skills the military brings to the table.

"This year . . . the pilot sat down with our team and came up with a plan to make sure everyone got to these sites before dark," says Rompré. "This co-operation in rainy, foggy weather allowed us to get 8,000 plants out of those swamps," he adds.

> **"When we land or work in small communities local people are always surprised to see that the RCMP, their local police force and the military can work together in order to make a difference in their small town.**
>
> RCMP Cpl Jean-Louis Rompré

RCMP RCMP

A Canadian Forces Sea King helicopter patrol searching for marijuana plants.

"They are excellent observers," says Canadian Forces Captain Terry Wong, who marvelled at his RCMP passenger's ability to identify objects on the ground while in flight. "It's like having a human GPS on board."

"A lot of the cops are very gung-ho," says Tos. "It makes it a good time for everyone when everyone is focused on one goal."

"The more flying hours we get, the more plants we can eradicate," says Rompré, who has seen first-hand the benefits of Canadian Forces support.

Canadian Forces personnel also see direct benefits.

"We do a lot of training where we have canned routes and canned training, but to get to fly with the RCMP where there is changing weather, changing conditions, changing crews . . . that is excellent," says Wong.

"Low-level work, lots of hovering — it pushes your flying to the max. It would prepare us for any type of mission we would get in the future," he adds.

The authorities and procedures for co-ordinating Canadian Forces support to RCMP-led counter-drug operations are captured in a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the two organizations.

The document empowers the RCMP's Assistant Commissioner Federal and International Operations to request support from the Commander, Canada Command.

"The MOU allows for a more timely and effective response by the Canadian Forces to requests from the RCMP," says Major John Preston, one of two Canadian Forces liaison officers stationed at RCMP headquarters in Ottawa.

Canada Command, which is also headquartered in Ottawa, tasks its six regional joint task forces to support the RCMP divisions leading specific counter-drug operations.

"When the RCMP asks for assistance, Canada Command is very receptive to responding," Preston adds.

On the ground and in the air, these efforts seem to be paying off.

"How easy it was to work with them was the thing that surprised me the most," says Wong. "The way we meshed together was very seamless."

"It is more than just a partnership," says Rompré. "It became a friendship. I really felt a part of their family and they feel like they're part of the RCMP." ■

John Price is a freelance writer living in Ottawa.

Youth crime reduction through intervention and diversion

By Louise Logue
RCMP National
Intervention/Diversion Unit

In 1994, the Ottawa Police Service (OPS) Youth Section began efforts to divert young offenders away from the formal criminal justice system. A small OPS team began solidifying partnerships with youth-serving agencies in Ottawa, thus enabling police officers to consider community diversion rather than criminal charges for young offenders involved in minor criminal conduct such as vandalism or minor assault.

In 2006, these efforts culminated in the launch of the Ottawa Community Youth Diversion Program (OCYDP). This community-led program provides police officers with the tools to identify young offenders who are at low or moderate risk to re-offend. Officers refer identified youths to a team of trained community youth workers, who then direct the youths to community resources that best address the factors that fuel their criminal conduct.

Screening for risk

In 2002, the OPS Youth Section established a formal link with Dr. Robert Hoge, a Carleton University professor and leading expert in the area of criminal psychology. The partnership led to the creation of a validated, standardized "risk screening tool" to help police officers determine a young offender's risk for recidivism.

The screening tool assists police officers in identifying and ranking certain risk factors such as substance abuse, negative peer associations and attitudes that support criminal conduct. Although the tool helps highlight a young offender's need for diversion services, it is not intended to replace police discretion and professional judgement in the decision-making process.

Intervention and diversion

Around 2005, the OPS Youth Intervention and Diversion Section incorporated the risk screening tool into a broader operational model for effectively diverting young offenders. This "Community Diversion Model" now forms the basis for the OCYDP, which is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services and managed by the Ottawa Boys and Girls Club.

Under the program, a designated OPS Youth Intervention and Diversion officer reviews files involving young offenders and uses both the screening tool and officer discretion to refer at-risk youth to the OCYDP team. For these "pre-charge" referrals (prior to any court action), the young offender must admit responsibility for the criminal incident and co-sign a voluntary referral form with his or her guardian. Crown attorneys can also refer young offenders to the OCYDP "post-charge" (after charges have been laid in court).

After referral, the OCYDP team reviews the file, meets with the young offender and guardian, administers a standardized, validated risk-needs assessment, and formulates a tailor-made "case action plan" for the individual youth (and his or her family, if required). With approximately 30 community-based agencies at the ready, the young offender is referred for intervention services that address his or her identified risk factors. Services could include drug or alcohol counselling, anger management counselling, recreational engagement, victim-offender mediation or community service hours.

The action plan also includes measures to repair any harm caused by the criminal incident — for example, through community service, apology to the victim or restitution. Because the program reveals an individual's risk factors and addresses them in a timely, meaningful and appropriate manner, it reduces the risk for re-offending.

Looking to the future

As of February 23, 2008, 398 youth had been referred to the OCYDP — including 238 pre-charge referrals and 104 post-charge referrals. Of the pre-charge referrals, 79 per cent successfully completed the diversion program, as did 71 per cent of the post-charge referrals. OCYDP partners are currently completing a study on recidivism rates among program graduates, as well as seeking additional funding to accommodate the estimated 1,200 Ottawa youth who could benefit from the diversion program each year.

Drawing from the OPS experience, RCMP Insp Rick Shaw of National Crime Prevention Services is now leading work to establish an RCMP Community Diversion Model that will benefit any community in any RCMP detachment or division wishing to engage in effective and efficient diversion efforts. ■

Louise Logue, a registered nurse, was hired by the Ottawa Police Service in 1994 to help develop a community-specific youth intervention/diversion strategy. She has since been seconded to the RCMP's National Crime Prevention Services to assist in developing a similar RCMP strategy with national scope.